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**INTRODUCTION**

**TO THE**

**HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY,**

**By VICTOR COUSIN,**

**PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**OF THE FACULTY OF LITERATURE AT PARIS.**

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**TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH**

**By HENNING GOTTFRIED LINBERG.**

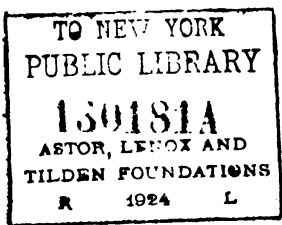
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**BOSTON:**

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*1832*



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FREEMAN AND BOLLES.

## THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE lectures of M. Victor Cousin possess an interest seldom to be met with in philosophical publications. It is certain that philosophical views and doctrines are no longer regarded, on the continent of Europe, merely as subjects of literary curiosity or of elegant entertainment. For it is well known that they excite strong emotions of sympathy and approbation, and are listened to and read with that attention and respect which is the most satisfactory evidence of a powerful conviction of their rationality and truth, by a very numerous class of intelligent and well informed young men, who may be fairly considered to represent the flower of the rising generation in their respective countries. Philosophical lectures therefore assume, on this account, an importance which is in a great measure independent of the opinions which we ourselves may form of the truth or fallacy of their contents. For although we may consider the principles which determine our own perceptions of truth, and the foundations upon which our own convictions rest, so firmly established as to be unwilling to submit them to any further discussion or examination; yet most men naturally desire to understand the spirit and to know the principles of truth, by which the public opinion of contiguous nations is influenced, and may probably be ruled, at no very distant period. Nothing therefore that is likely to influence public opinion in France can be indifferent to the people of the United States. For if contiguity can be predicated of the spirit of different nations, as well as of their local position in space, the French nation may, in the first sense of the word, be said to be nearer neighbors to the inhabitants of America, than to those of Great Britain; and besides this, the high rank among civilized nations, which is held

by France, as well as the powerful influence which the spirit of France is well known to exert on the state of public opinion throughout Europe, must necessarily render the peculiar qualities and character of that spirit at any particular epoch the source of incalculable good or evil to all contemporary nations.

But it is impossible to enter so deeply into the spirit of a nation at a given epoch, by any other means, as by examining closely the philosophy which then begins to predominate among them. For, — as M. Cousin has clearly proved in the lectures which contain an introduction to the history of philosophy, and of which a translation is hereby offered to the public, — it is an incontestable fact that systems of philosophy, which at any particular time acquire an ascendancy over the minds of great masses of mankind, cannot be regarded as the arbitrary productions of the minds of human individuals. For the mind of man is incapable of submitting its thought to the guidance of any human individual like himself; and the spirit of the individual, when apparently guided by the directions of another man, really follows only the dictates of the general spirit of the society, of the nation, or of the race to which he belongs, and of which the man who apparently leads him, is only the representative. And in most instances, and especially in those in which men do not determine their thoughts and actions with conscious volition, they are guided by a spirit which they perceive to be their own, but which, on reflection they acknowledge to be a spirit appertaining also to many other men in common with themselves. Now it is well known that the general spirit of thought and act, which at a given epoch pervades great bodies of men, becomes sometimes, and in certain respects, as it were incarnate in certain great individuals who are called men of genius; and the minds of such men are endowed with the peculiar faculty of producing distinct, precise, definite, clear and luminous ideas which exactly correspond to the affections of the general or universal spirit, which at that epoch predominates among their countrymen or among all civilized nations in common. These ideas the man of genius clothes in actions, words, or other things that signify or represent them; so that when his countrymen are made sensible of these things, the ideas which they represent or signify, infallibly present themselves to their minds. When such ideas are merely the arbitrary productions of an individual mind, or of a spirit foreign to their own, men view them with indifference or disgust. But ideas which are the productions of real genius do not correspond to the affections of

any arbitrary or foreign spirit, but to the affections of the men to whose minds they are presented. These affections constantly strive to produce the very same ideas in the mind of the most ordinary hearer; but they are not able to do it, because the spirit of his age and country, though present in the mind even of the most ordinary individual, does not predominate there so exclusively, as it does in the mind of a man of genius; and the ideas which it produces in the mind of an ordinary man, are therefore so blended and confused with other ideas, that they do not assume a form sufficiently clear and striking, to be immediately recognised so as powerfully to affect his sympathies. When therefore these ideas are presented to his mind in the definite, clear, luminous and stirring productions of genius, he immediately recognises them, is delighted with them, and embraces them as flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone.

For wit is reason to advantage dress'd;  
What oft was felt, but ne'er so well express'd.

Of all the productions of genius, however, none operate so powerfully and so extensively upon the human mind as the results of philosophical speculation; for they present to the eye of the understanding precisely the most abstract, the most definite, the most general or universal, and in reality the most clear and luminous ideas, and those which correspond to the most interior affections of the human mind. I believe that the affections of the human mind, from which our habitual thoughts proceed, are those which are most nearly allied to the arbitrary affections of our individuality. These, therefore, are the most fanciful and superficial of all. Then succeed ideas corresponding to the affections of our intimate friends and kindred, then those of our habitual associates; then those which we consider as the ends of our country or of the whole human race; and, finally, those which we consider as the ends of being in itself, of absolute causality, of life itself, that is, of God; which are the inmost affections of human life. Now as philosophy is the study of truth, philosophical ideas, properly so called, correspond only to our most interior, if not to the very inmost affections of our life,—to our affections of the highest and most universal truth to which human understanding can reach. And as ideas produce effects upon our minds, which when perceived with equal clearness, are the more powerful and lasting, in proportion as the affections to which they correspond are the more interior, therefore ideas truly philosophical, affect mankind more powerfully than any other ideas; and being the most general and



universal of all, the sphere of their operation is consequently the most extensive. Hence it appears to me incontestable, that in every great and eminently successful philosopher we behold, as in a mirror, the spirit of a very great part of the nation and epoch to which he belongs. If it therefore be true that Voltaire represented the spirit of the greater part of the higher orders in France, when he said that the success of Helvetius was not astonishing because he only told the secret of all the world — that is, of all the world at his day ; it is but reasonable to conclude that the spirit of the well informed and intelligent young men in France, who at the present day idolize Cousin, is as superior to the spirit presented by Voltaire, as the interior, intellectual and dignified philosophy of Cousin is superior to the superficial, fanciful, and groveling sensualism of Helvetius.

Whatever judgment the public may form of M. Cousin's philosophical doctrines, I feel confident that many will sympathize deeply with the noble, generous and independent spirit that pervades these lectures ; as well as with the genuine and enlightened love of humanity, and with the deep veneration with which they tend to inspire the reader for its Author ; the acknowledgement of whose personality and distinctness from the universe, and of his all wise beneficence and universal as well as special providence, constitutes an integral part of M. Cousin's philosophy. M. Cousin avows every where distinctly, and without reserve or hypocrisy, his firm belief in the truth of the Christian religion, which he deeply and sincerely venerates, even in the mysterious forms in which Catholicism has enveloped it ; but he also maintains that these mysteries are by no means inaccessible to human understanding ; and he considers them consequently, as proper subjects of philosophical inquiry and elucidation. The following lectures, which were delivered and published in Paris in 1828, contain a general introduction to the universal history of philosophy. They were succeeded by a course of lectures, published in Paris in 1829, in two volumes, on the philosophy of the 18th century. These lectures contain, nevertheless, besides the history of the philosophy of that century, a summary but complete and luminous exposition of all the philosophical systems which are known to have prevailed in the world prior to the eighteenth century. The author commences this exposition with giving an account of the most ancient systems of philosophy, of which some doubtless flourished in the remotest ages of Indian antiquity ; although their dates cannot be ascertained, because the history of India is destitute of any chronology ; he

pursues the traces of human intelligence and independent thought, throughout all the epochs and schools of Greek philosophy, as well as of that of the middle ages ; and finally he fully explains the origin and developement of modern philosophy from Des Cartes and Bacon to the commencement of the eighteenth century. The lectures contained in the second volume treat of the philosophy of sensation ; and they are almost entirely filled with an analysis of Locke's essay on the understanding ; an analysis which must be acknowledged to be, perhaps, the greatest masterpiece of philosophical criticism ever exhibited to the public. Indeed all M. Cousin's lectures contain the most evident and decisive proofs, that they are the work of no ordinary genius ; that they are the productions of a mind at once powerful and comprehensive, combining acute penetration with accurate discernment, and the most unerring dialectical precision with a clearness and ingenuity of exposition, and a command of language, which render the most abstruse and difficult points of metaphysical discussion easily intelligible and by no means fatiguing, even to ordinary readers, if they possess common patience, and habits of earnest attention in any moderate degree.

In the work which now appears, M. Cousin introduces his audience to the study of the history of philosophy, by pointing out and firmly establishing the rank and station properly belonging to philosophy, in that general order in which all the constituent parts of human knowledge must be arranged, so as to be perceived as distinct but indispensable parts of one harmonious and coherent system ; by showing in the same manner the place properly belonging to the history of philosophy in its relations to the other constituent parts of general history ; and also by putting his hearers in possession of the theoretical and historical views and principles that preside over his instruction. M. Cousin considers history as a complete and systematically arranged account of the successive and simultaneous developements of all the elements which constitute humanity ; and thus as the most complete and luminous philosophy of the human mind. And as the mind of a human individual is the only type and representative which presents to human understanding a visible image of humanity in general ; and as the elements which constitute humanity in one individual must be the same as those which constitute humanity in great bodies of human individuals ; he thinks it necessary first to examine the developement of these elements, as they present themselves to us in our own consciousness ; in

order to discover the principles, according to which we are to examine the developement of humanity, on a more extensive scale, in the process of civilization which it is the province of history to represent. He therefore enters into a most ingenious analysis of the elements of human thought, which he reduces to three fundamental elements, without which no object of perception can be given to human understanding; and which are therefore discoverable in all objects of our perception, in our ideas of ourselves, of the human race, of nature, of God, and of all things. They are the ideas of the infinite, of the finite, and of the relations which unite these two elements so as to constitute one distinct object of perception. To the ideas of these fundamental elements, and to the essential laws of the human mind, of which the most abstract and universal expression constitutes metaphysics or philosophy, properly so called, he refers all the great and leading characteristics which he has sketched of the principal epochs of humanity. And as the philosophy properly belonging to and developed by every particular epoch of society presents the most clear, the most general, and the most determinate expression of that epoch; every great epoch of history must necessarily terminate in and be represented by a philosophical system peculiar to itself; and such a philosophical system must therefore especially appertain to the nineteenth century. It is this philosophy which M. Cousin has made his particular study, and which he professes to teach; and he maintains that its specific and distinguishing characteristic is eclecticism. Its distinguishing features and general spirit are rendered sufficiently perceptible by the mode in which M. Cousin applies its principles, in the course of a great variety of highly interesting discussions on historical, literary, and political, as well as philosophical subjects. Indeed the author expressly states, towards the conclusion of the thirteenth lecture, that the purpose which in the course of these lectures he had principally in view, was to enable the young men of France, who had formerly shown that they placed some confidence in him, to know fully and on all points, him, "who after a long exile, had now returned to devote the rest of his life to their service."

H. G. L.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY.

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## LECTURE I.

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### S U M M A R Y.

*Subject of the Course.* General history of Philosophy, as an introduction to the particular history of the Platonic philosophy. *Subject of this first Lecture.* Establishment of this point, — that philosophy is a true want, and a necessary product, of the spirit of man. Enumeration of the fundamental wants of the spirit of man, of the general ideas which govern his activity. 1st. The idea of the *Useful*, producing mathematics, physics, industry and political economy; 2d. The idea of the *Just*, producing civil society, the state, jurisprudence; 3d. The idea of the *Beautiful*, producing art; 4th. The idea of *God*, producing religion, worship; 5th. *Reflection*, — reality of the want, and necessity of the act, which serve as a foundation for philosophy. Philosophy, the last development and last form of thought. Philosophy the source of all light. Supremacy of philosophy. Its tolerance; destroys nothing, accepts every thing, explains every thing, and governs every thing. Its relation to the civilization of the 19th century. Subject of the next lecture.

GENTLEMEN, —

I cannot but feel profound emotion in finding myself again in this chair, to which I was called in the year 1815, by the choice of my illustrious master and friend, M. Roger Collard. The first

blows of a power, which no longer exists, drove me from it: I am happy and proud to appear here, to-day, with the return of the constitutional hopes of France; and with loyal gratitude, I would thus publicly offer my thanks to my country, to the king, and to the new administration.

Separated from the public during the last eight years, I have wholly lost the habit of addressing assemblies like the present. Accustomed, in my retreat, to those forms of thought, which suffice for the understanding of ourselves, but do not always make us intelligible to others, I fear I may not find words that will satisfy a numerous audience, nor succeed, in bringing to this chair the monologues of a solitary man.

A few weeks since, I was wholly ignorant that I should appear before you; no preparation accompanies and sustains me. Prudence, therefore, counseled me to delay the delivery of my lectures, and to labor to render them, for the next year, less unworthy of your attention. But these were only personal considerations, and I thought I should do well to disregard them, and think only of my duty; and it seemed to me a duty, as soon as leave was given me, to avail myself without delay of the permission to renew the interrupted series of the Lectures of the Normal School; to reappear upon the scene of my former labors, to rally around me those by whom I am yet remembered, and to come

here, at the expense of my vanity and self-love, to serve the cause of philosophy. Instead of consulting my strength, I have trusted to my known intentions, and to the indulgence experienced on former occasions. I bring back to you the same professor, the same instruction, the same zeal: may I find among you the same confidence! In casting my eyes around me, I bear witness unto myself, that in the midst of the agitations of our epoch, and among the various changes in the political events with which I have been mingled, my wishes have never passed beyond the scene that now encompasses me. Devoted entirely to philosophy, after having had the honor to suffer somewhat in her cause, I come to consecrate to her, irrevocably and without reserve, all that remains to me of strength and of life.

Gentlemen, I purpose, during the following year, to introduce you into Greece, and to make you acquainted with the admirable philosophy to which Plato has given his name, and which recalls all that is most profound in thought and most graceful in imagination. But, do you think that any system whatsoever can be understood, if isolated? Can the most vigorous and penetrating intellect predict with infallible accuracy all the consequences, unknown to its very author, which a system contains within its bosom? What are principles without the chain of their consequences!

A system cannot be thoroughly comprehended, until we know all the consequences which have actually followed and which it is the business of history to trace from it, in the application of its principles. On the other hand, we cannot become thoroughly acquainted with a system, without knowing whence it came, what are its antecedents, and what systems it presupposes. For instance, it will be admitted, that Plato cannot be understood without his successors, the new Platonists; but Plato can be no better understood without his forerunners, his fathers, so to speak, Heraclitus and Pythagoras. If then, gentlemen, I wish to make you thoroughly comprehend the Platonic philosophy, it will be necessary for me to show you its connexion and relations with that general epoch of the history of philosophy, to which it belongs.

But, that which is true of a system, is equally true of the different epochs of the history of philosophy. An epoch is not, in fact, any thing else than the sovereignty of some one great system, which, itself, had its preceding and its subsequent systems; all which it is equally necessary to know: so that, if we should reduce the whole history of philosophy to a very small number of these epochs, it would still be impossible to comprehend any one of them, without understanding all, together with their various relations to each other. I regard it,

therefore, as indispensable, to exhibit to you, during the brief space which remains before the vacations commence, a general review of all the epochs of the history of philosophy, by way of introduction to a complete exposition of the Platonic philosophy, and of that epoch in the history of philosophy to which it belongs. Doubtless I shall do no more than touch lightly over every thing, but I will endeavor that nothing escape me. I must first trace out the sketch, leaving the completion of the picture to a later labor, when we shall enter more deeply into the examination of the particular epochs of the history of philosophy in their order ; as for instance, we shall enter next year, into the examination of that great epoch, which the Platonic philosophy almost entirely fills.

Besides, this plan will enable me to set forth my opinions more advantageously. All the problems which human thought can propose to itself, will thus be brought to this chair, after having been successively subjected to examination by different ages and by different schools. Here, from the vantage-ground of science and of history, the public, who know me not, and who would learn, in the beginning, whither I propose to lead them, will see more plainly my object, my designs, and, if I may so express myself, that star of philosophy which must be our light and our guide throughout the whole course of the long journey which we are to make together,



in the study and examination of the different schools which have shared among them the spirit of humanity, and of the different problems by which that spirit has been agitated. Thus, gentlemen, for the next year, Plato and Greece; for this year, humanity in its whole integrity, and the general history of philosophy.

But, gentlemen, do you not perceive that I am reasoning upon a supposition, which many of you may not be disposed to admit, viz. that the history of the problems and of the schools of philosophy, is not a register of arbitrary imaginations; that philosophy itself is not the product of idle reverie, but the necessary developement of what is destined to supply a positive demand of the understanding. Upon this point we must, first of all, learn to understand each other. Is philosophy nothing but a tradition of chimeras, which sprung forth from the reveries of some men of genius, and were spread through the world and propagated and maintained by the authority of their example; or is it the legitimate child of humanity? Does it belong only to Plato and to Aristotle, or to the human intellect? Is it but a caprice or luxury of thought, or has it a foundation in the nature which is common to us all, and does it consequently hold its own appropriate rank amongst the objects of human knowledge, and is its history a serious thing? The examination of this question

will be the subject of this lecture. In the first place, we must determine whether we are brought here by vain curiosity, and by simple habit; or if we are indeed to endeavor, with common effort, not to torture, with more or less ingenuity, mere chimeras, but to satisfy a craving of a higher nature, yet not less real than any other, and equally inherent in the very constitution of humanity.

As soon as man has a consciousness of himself, he finds himself in a world which is strange and hostile to him, and the laws and phenomena of which seem to be in contradiction with his own existence. As the means of his defence, he possesses intelligence and liberty. He does not support himself, he does not live, he does not breathe, two minutes in succession, but on condition of *foreseeing*, that is to say, on condition of having become acquainted with those laws and phenomena, which would crush his feeble existence, if he did not learn by little and little, to observe them, to measure their reach, and to calculate their recurrence. By means of his intelligence, successively developed and well directed, he acquires a knowledge of this world; by the use of his liberty he modifies, he changes, he reconstructs it, for his own use; he arrests the growth of deserts, builds a pathway across the streams, levels mountains; and in one word, in a succession of ages, he works out that series of prodigies, which now but feebly

affect us, because we are conscious of our power, and accustomed to its effects. Gentlemen, the first man, who, at the slightest distance from his person, measured the space which surrounded him, counted the objects which presented themselves to him, and observed their properties and their action; that man created and brought into the world the mathematical and physical sciences. The first person who modified, in the slightest degree, that which offered to him an obstacle, he created industry. Multiply ages, fertilize this feeble germ by the accumulated labors of generations, and you have all which at this moment exists. The mathematical and physical sciences are a conquest of human intelligence over the secrets of nature; industry is a conquest of the freedom of human volition over the forces of this same nature. The world, such as man found it, was a stranger to him; the world, such as the sciences of mathematics and physics, and, following in their train, industry, have made it, is a world like unto man, reconstructed by him in his own image. In fact, look around you, you will perceive scarcely any thing but yourself; you will find every where the form, more or less degraded and enfeebled, of human intelligence and freedom. Nature had made only things, that is, beings without a value; man has metamorphosed these things; and, in giving them his form, has fixed upon them the impress of

his personality, has elevated them into images of freedom and intelligence, and has thereby communicated to them a portion of the worth which resides in him. The primitive world is but a basis, a matter fitted for the labor of man ; all the value which analysis can leave to it, is the possibility that man should make use of it. There is its noblest destiny ; as it is the destiny of man, in his relations with the world, to assimilate that nature unto himself in the utmost possible degree, to metamorphose it, to deposit and exhibit there, unceasingly more and more, the freedom and intelligence with which he is gifted. Industry, it gives me pleasure to repeat, is the triumph of man over that nature the tendency of which was to overwhelm and destroy him, and which retreats before him and is changed in his hands ; it is nothing less than the creation of a new world by man ; it has no other limits than those of power and of thought ; its end is the entire absorption of nature into humanity. Political economy explains the secret, or rather the detail of all this ; it follows the progress of industry, which is again connected with that of mathematics and physics.

I hope, Gentlemen, that no one will accuse me of injustice in regard to the mathematical and physical sciences, to industry and to political economy. I ask only whether there are no other sciences but those of mathematics and physics ? Is there no

other power but that of industry ? And has political economy exhausted all the powers of the human intellect ? Mathematics and physics, industry and political economy have one and the same object, the useful. The question then changes itself into this: is there no desire, no craving in our nature, for any thing but for the useful ; is that the sole idea to which all the ideas that exist in the intellect return ; is that the only aspect under which man regards all things, and the only character he recognises in them ? No ; it is a fact, that among all the actions which the different relations among men engender, there are some, which, beside their character of useful or harmful, present another, — that of just or unjust ; this new character is as real as the other, and produces new results as certain as the former and far more worthy of admiration.

The idea of the just is one of those ideas which constitute the glory of human nature. Man perceives it in the beginning ; but he perceives it only as a lightning-flash amidst the profound darkness of his early passions ; he sees it unceasingly violated, and at every moment effaced by the inevitable disorder of passion and conflicting interests. That which men have been pleased to call society in a state of nature, is nothing more than a state of war, where the right of the strongest reigns, and the idea of justice comes not at all, or comes only to be trodden under foot by passion. But, at

length, this idea strikes the mind of man so strongly, it corresponds so well with what exists most interiorly within him, that, by degrees, the desire of realizing it becomes an imperious craving of his nature. And, as before, he had modeled external nature anew, upon the idea of the useful; so now, in the place of primitive society, where all things were in confusion, he creates a new society, upon the basis of one single idea, that of justice. Justice established, constitutes the state. The use of the state is to cause justice to be respected by means of force; and it acts in conformity with an idea, which is inherent in that of justice, to wit, that injustice ought not only to be repressed, but punished. Hence arises a new state of society, civil and political society, which is nothing less than justice acting by means of that legal order which the state represents. But the state takes no notice of the infinite variety of human elements which were conflicting amidst the confusion and chaos of natural society; it does not embrace the whole man; it considers him only in his relation to the idea of the just and the unjust, — that is to say, as capable of committing or suffering an injury, — that is to say again, as capable of impeding or being impeded by others, by fraud or violence in the exercise of that agency, which, so far as it is inoffensive, should be voluntary and free. Hence are derived all legal duties and all legal rights. The

sole legal right, is that of being respected in the peaceable exercise of liberty ; the sole duty, (I speak now only of civil order) is that of respecting the liberty of others. Justice is no more than this ; justice is the maintenance of reciprocal liberty. The state then does not put a limit to freedom, as has been said ; for it only developes and confirms it. Besides, in primitive society, men are necessarily unequal, by their wants, their sentiments, their physical, intellectual, and moral faculties ; but in the presence of the state, which considers men only as persons, as free beings, all men are equal ; liberty being equal to itself, and the only type and measure of equality, which otherwise would consist merely in the resemblance of things to each other, and imply their inequality in other respects. Equality then, is the fundamental attribute of liberty ; and, with liberty, it constitutes the basis of legal order and of that political world which in regard to the relations of men with each other, is a creation of the genius of man, more marvellous than the existing world of industry compared with the primitive world of nature.

But human intelligence goes still farther. Another incontestable fact proves, that, in the infinite variety of external objects and human actions, there are some, which appear to us not only as useful or harmful, as just or unjust, but as beautiful or its opposite. The idea of the beautiful is equally

inherent in the mind of man, as that of the useful or that of the just. Interrogate yourselves when a vast and tranquil sea, when mountains of harmonious proportions, when the manly or graceful form of man or woman, is present to your view, or some trait of heroic devotion, to your recollection. Once impressed with the idea of the beautiful, man seizes, disengages, extends, develops and purifies it in his thought, and by the assistance of this idea, which external objects have suggested to him, he re-examines these same objects, and finds them inferior to the idea which they themselves had suggested. Just as the beneficent powers of nature at first appear to us only as mingled with frightful and disastrous phenomena which conceal them from our view ; and as justice and virtue appear only as transient flashes amidst the chaos of primitive society ; so, in the world of forms, beauty can exhibit itself only in a manner, which, while it reveals, veils and obscures it. How obscure, how equivocal and incomplete is the resemblance between the idea of the infinite and a vast ocean or a lofty mountain ; the first is but a great volume of water, the second a mass of rock. The most beautiful object in the world, the most charming figure is, in some respect, defective. How many miserable minutiae connect beauty with matter ! Heroism itself, the greatest and the purest beauty, heroism, examined closely, appears some-



times pitiful. All that is actual, is mingled and imperfect. All existing beauty, whatever may be its kind or nature, fades when compared with the idea of beauty which it reveals. What then does man? After having given new forms to nature and to primitive society by industry and by the laws, he forms anew the objects which had given to him the idea of beauty, upon the model of that idea itself, and makes them more beautiful than ever. Instead of resting in the barren contemplation of the ideal, he creates, for this ideal, a new form in nature, which reflects its beauty with far more truth than nature did at first. The beauty of art is as much superior to the beauty of nature, as man is to nature. Nor ought we to say, that this beauty is chimerical; the highest truth exists in thought; that which best reflects thought, is that which is most true; and the works of art are, in this respect, far more true than those of nature. The world of art is as true as the world of politics and the world of industry. Like them, it is the work of human intelligence; and of human freedom bestowing its labor, here, upon refractory powers of nature and unbridled passions; there, upon coarse and imperfect representations of beauty.

Imagine a being who had been present at the earliest days of the universe and of human life; who had seen the external surface of the earth as it came forth from the hands of nature, and looked

upon all the beauty of those ancient times ; who had seen the beautiful forms which nature presented, and heard the melodious sounds which she then uttered ; in a word, a being, who had been a spectator of the first exhibition of the primitive world, and who should return at the present day amidst the prodigies of our industry, of our institutions, and of our arts : would it not seem to him, in his astonishment, as if he no longer recognised the ancient dwelling place of man ; as if beings of a superior order had transferred their abode to the earth and metamorphosed it ?

But the world, thus metamorphosed by the power of man ; nature, thus formed anew in his own image ; society, thus ordered in accordance with the rule of justice ; those miracles of art, whose enchantment he has thrown around his life ; do not suffice for man. His thought rushes forward and backward beyond the limits of this world, which it embellishes and adorns ; man, all powerful as he is, conceives, and cannot but conceive, a power superior to his own and to that of nature ; a power which, doubtless, only manifests itself by its works, that is to say, by nature and humanity ; which we contemplate only in its works ; of which we can form no conceptions, but with reference to its works, which conceptions are always subject to reservations implied by the acknowledgement of the superiority of essence and of absolute omnipotence.

Chained within the limits of this world, man sees nothing but through this world and under the forms of this world ; but through these forms and under these forms, he is irresistibly compelled to suppose something which he regards as the substance, the cause and the model of all the forces and of all the perfections which he perceives in himself and in the world. In a word, beyond the world of industry, the political world, and that of art, man conceives God. The God of humanity is no more separated from the world than he is concentrated within it. A God without a world must be regarded by man, as if he were not ; a world without God is, to his thought, an incomprehensible enigma, and to his heart, an insupportable burthen.

The perception of God, as distinct in himself from the world, but as manifestly appearing therein, is natural religion. But as man did not rest satisfied with the world as he found it, with primitive society, or with natural beauty ; neither does he stop at natural religion. In fact, natural religion, that is to say, that instinctive thought whose flight athwart the world reaches God, appears in the life of the natural man only as a flash of light, marvellous, but fugitive. This flash of light, like the ideas of the beautiful, of the just, of the useful, illumines his soul. But in this world, every thing tends to obscure, to distract, to mislead religious sentiment. What then does man ? He cre-

ates, for the use of the new idea which governs him, another world, different from that of nature ; a world in which, abstracting from every other consideration, he perceives nothing but its divine character, that is, its relation to God. The world of religion, is worship. In truth, it is but a powerless sentiment of religion which rests satisfied with an unfrequent, vague, and barren contemplation. It belongs to the essence of every thing which is strong, to develop itself, to realize itself. The rites of worship then, are the development, the realization of the sentiment of religion, not its limitation. Worship is to natural religion, what art is to natural beauty, what the state is to primitive society, what the world of industry is to that of nature. The triumph of religious intuition is in the creation of the ritual of worship ; as the triumph of the idea of the beautiful, is in the creation of art ; as that of the idea of the just is in the creation of the state. The world of worship is infinitely superior to the ordinary world in this ; that, in the first place, it has no other object in view but that of reminding man of God ; while external nature, besides its relation to God, has many relations which unceasingly draw feeble humanity away from the sight of Him : secondly, because, as the representation of divine things, it is infinitely more clear : thirdly, because it is permanent, while, in our unsteady contemplation, the divine character

of the world is every instant enfeebled or eclipsed. Worship, because specific in its object, because clear and permanent, recalls man to the recollection of God, a thousand fold more forcibly than the world. It is a victory over the baser elements of life, more lofty than that of industry, of the state, and of art.

But on what condition can religious worship effectually recall man to the recollection of his Creator ? On the condition inherent in all worship ; that of presenting, under external forms and vivid images and symbols, those relations of humanity and the world to God, which in themselves are so obscure. Thus far advanced, humanity has doubtless, ascended on high ; but has she reached a boundary beyond which she cannot pass ? All truth, whereby in this place is meant all the relations of man and of the world to God, is, I believe, deposited in the sacred symbols of religion. But can the progress of thought be arrested by symbols ? Enthusiasm having once perceived God in the world, creates religious worship, and in that again she contemplates God. Faith attaches herself to these symbols. She contemplates in them what is not in them, or at least what reaches them only indirectly. Herein, precisely, consists the grandeur of faith, which is able to recognise God in that which does not visibly contain him. But enthusiasm and faith are not, and cannot be, the

last steps of the developement of human intelligence. In the very presence of the symbol, man, after having worshipped, feels the necessity of accounting to himself for having done so. To account to ourselves, gentlemen, is an expression of great import. On what conditions in fact, are we able to account for any thing? On one only; of being able to decompose that for which we would account; of being able to transform it into pure conceptions which the mind afterwards examines, and on the truth or falsehood of which it pronounces. Thus reflection succeeds to enthusiasm and faith. If poetry is the voice, and hymns the natural expression, of enthusiasm and faith, reflection has for its instrument, dialectics; and we have now reached a different world from that of symbolism and worship. The day, on which man for the first time reflected, was the day on which he created philosophy; for philosophy is nothing else than reflection on a great scale; reflection, with the whole array of processes and methods which belong to it; reflection, elevated to the rank and authority of method. Indeed philosophy is but method; perhaps no truth belongs to it, exclusively, but all belong to it; because philosophy alone can account for them, put them to the test of examination and analysis, and convert them into ideas.

Ideas are thought in its natural form. They may be true or false; they may be rectified, developed,

&c. ; yet they all possess the peculiar property of being perceived by thought to have a direct meaning, and of needing nothing to render them intelligible, but themselves. In certain cases it may be necessary that they be presented in a certain order ; but their combination changes nothing of their nature ; they have different degrees ; but, in their lowest, as in their highest degree, they preserve always their distinctive character, which is that of being the adequate form of thought, that is to say, — thought itself, comprehending and recognising itself. Now, thought is understood only by its own means ; because, at last, thought comprehends only itself. It is only itself which it comprehends in those inferior spheres that we have been considering ; there it comprehends itself imperfectly ; because it perceives itself under a form, more or less untrue ; it can only comprehend itself perfectly, by distinctly recognising itself as the object of its thought.

Having come to this point, thought has reached its limit ; for it is manifestly impossible that thought, by means of itself, should go beyond itself.

Thought then, cannot pass beyond the limit which we have just assigned to it ; but its necessary tendency is towards this limit ; it endeavors to lay hold upon itself, to study itself under its essential form, and in so far as it has failed to reach this limit, so far is its developement incomplete. Phi-

losophy is this complete developement of thought. Undoubtedly there are bad as well as good philosophies, as there are different modes of religious worship, as there are defective works of art and of policy, and bad systems of industry and of physics. But philosophy, as philosophy, is nevertheless specifically and truly demanded by the intellect, as much as religion, art, the state, industry, and the sciences; it is a necessary result which is derived from, and depends upon — not the genius of any individual — but the genius of humanity itself, and the progressive developement of the faculties with which humanity is gifted. Let not those whom philosophy offends, accuse it; they may accuse humanity and Him who created it. But let us rather congratulate ourselves, that we belong to a privileged race, so miraculously endowed, that our thoughts can lay hold even on themselves, and perceive nothing but thought, every where and always.

Ideas, gentlemen, they are the only proper objects of philosophy; they constitute the world of philosophy. And do not permit yourself to believe that ideas represent other things, and that we have faith in them, because of their resemblance to those things which they are appointed to represent. Ideas, it has been elsewhere demonstrated, represent nothing, absolutely nothing but themselves. The contrary supposition implies that what itself is invisible, may be representative. Ideas have but one char-



acter, it is that of being intelligible: I add that there is nothing intelligible but ideas; that it is always they, which, often without our knowing it, under different forms, compel our assent. Philosophy is the culture of ideas, and of ideas only; it is the last victory of thought over every foreign form and element. Industry was the first enfranchisement of nature; the state was another and a greater; art a new progress; religion a progress still more sublime; philosophy is the last enfranchisement, the last progress of thought.

Endeavor to derange the order in which I have successively presented to you the different spheres we have passed over, and you will find it impossible. Without industry, without some security against the external world, without the state, without the subjection of passion to law, all regular exercise of thought is absolutely impossible. Such derangement would imply that reflection had preceded enthusiasm, that philosophy had anticipated art. But then the artist would not possess the secret of his art; he becomes a philosopher only, by ceasing to be an artist. It is so with religion; within its sacred images and venerable instructions, it comprises every truth; no one is wanting; but all are there in a mysterious twilight. It is by faith that religion attaches itself to its objects; it is faith which it challenges; it is faith which it addresses; it is the merit of faith which it demands

from humanity. And faith is indeed meritorious ; it is a virtue in humanity, to be able to believe that which it sees not, in that which it sees. Such derangement would also imply that analysis and dialectics had preceded symbols and mysteries ; but the rational form of thought, is necessarily the last of all.

This form is also the clearest. Ideas are doubtless obscure to the senses, to the imagination, and to the soul. The senses see only the external objects on which they lay hold ; imagination demands representations, the soul requires sentiments. But, if all apparent light is given by these, yet the evidence, even of these, is valid only on condition, that within the interiors of thought, there exist another evidence which may guarantee the former. But, at first, this internal evidence is feeble ; it cannot attain to any consciousness of itself ; whilst the evidence of philosophy, which is the offspring of reflection, is, and knows itself to be the last evidence, the only authority. Philosophy then, is the light of all lights, the authority of authorities.

In fact, they who would impose upon philosophy and thought, a higher authority, do not consider that, of these two results, one must take place ; either the understanding will not comprehend this authority, which will then be regarded by it as if it did not exist ; or it will comprehend it, it will form an idea of it, it will admit it on this ground ; and then,

in doing so, it will regard itself as the measure and rule, and ultimate authority. After having thus proclaimed the supremacy of philosophy, let us hasten to add that it is essentially tolerant. In fact, philosophy is the absolute intelligence, the absolute explanation of every thing. Of what then can it be the enemy ? Philosophy enters into no combat with industry ; but comprehends it, and refers it to principles which govern those which industry and political economy acknowledge. Philosophy combats not jurisprudence, but elevates it to a higher sphere, and becomes the spirit of the laws. Philosophy plucks not from art its divine wings, but follows its flight, and measures its reach and aim. Sister of religion, she derives, from an intimate connexion with her, her most potent inspirations ; she applies to use her sublime instructions and holy images ; but, at the same time, she converts the truths which religion offers into her own proper substance, and her own peculiar form. She does not destroy, she illuminates and fertilizes the truths of faith ; and gently elevates them, from their first dawning in the shadows of the symbol, into the broad daylight of pure intelligence.

All the demands which we have passed in review, are equally specific, equally certain, equally necessary ; and they form, taken together, as it were the whole soul of humanity. But the peculiar urgency of each of these demands which constitutes

its power, consists in its tendency to realize itself separately; and they do so. Very often, — far too often, — philosophy, religion, art, the state, and industry, are engaged in actual conflicts with each other. True philosophy embraces at once religion, art, the state, and industry; it is not exclusive; on the contrary, it is bound to conciliate and to combine all. I trust, gentlemen, that, from this chair, no language shall ever be heard which shall exclude, or excite hostility against any thing that is beautiful and good. It is true that philosophy, instead of forming a party among mankind, should rule all parties; such, I hope, will be the spirit of my instruction; such is the new character which will be given to French philosophy by the civilization of the nineteenth century.

Young men, you who propose to attend these lectures, love every thing that is good, every thing that is beautiful, every thing that is honest; for this is the foundation of all philosophy. Adding itself to every thing, philosophy communicates to every thing its own form; it destroys nothing. Follow the general movement of physical sciences and the arts; contemplate the instructive spectacle of human intelligence and freedom, advancing day by day, to the conquest and dominion of the sensible world; study the laws of our great country; imbibe from this study, with the love of these glorious laws, a love for the princes who have given and who main-

tain them ; drink in, at the source of arts and letters, enthusiasm for all that is beautiful ; nourished at the bosom of Christianity, prepared by her noble instructions for philosophy, and having thus reached the full accomplishment of your earlier studies, you will find, in true philosophy, together with the understanding and explanation of all things, a peace, elevated and unchangeable. I repeat, it is the peculiar characteristic of our times, to exclude nothing, to accept every thing, to comprehend every thing ; and may this be the honorable character of the youth of France. I will endeavor to be to them, no unfaithful guide.

Gentlemen, I have endeavored, in this lecture, to show you that philosophy is one of the specific, certain, permanent, and indestructible demands of the human mind. This I have demonstrated, by a rapid examination of the fundamental wants of man. In the next lecture, I propose to demonstrate this in another way ; I shall consider the mind of man in its visible image, history ; and I hope to demonstrate by history, that philosophy, being a want inherent in the human character, has never been absent from any epoch of humanity, but has accompanied the whole course of its developement. This will be the subject of my next lecture.

## LECTURE II.

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Recapitulation of the last lecture. Subject of this ; — the verification, by history, of psychological results. Has philosophy had an historical existence, and what has that existence been ? 1st. The East ; its general character ; Birth of Philosophy. 2d. Greece and Rome ; their general character ; developement of philosophy. Socrates. 3d. Middle ages. Scholastics. 4th. Modern philosophy. Descartes. 5th. Present condition of philosophy. View of the future. Conclusion : — that philosophy has not been wanting, in any epoch of humanity ; that its importance has increased from epoch to epoch, and that its future tendency is to become a still more important branch of history.

GENTLEMEN, —

I have endeavored to vindicate philosophy ; to prove that it was not the dream of particular individuals, but the necessary developement of one of the fundamental wants of human nature. I therefore interrogated human nature : I reviewed all the wants which it includes, all the general ideas which govern its developement : they are — the idea of the useful, the idea of the just, the idea of the beautiful, the idea of the holy and the divine : and beyond these I have discovered yet another, the idea of the

true, of the true in itself; no longer conceived in any of its subordinate degrees, and in its inferior forms, but in its highest degree, and in its purest form, beyond which, thought, in its freest flight, cannot go; because this form is precisely the essential and adequate form of thought itself. I have established; first, that these different ideas are not illusions, but facts — facts, which are attested by the authority of consciousness, and which therefore cannot be regarded otherwise than as real elements of human nature: secondly, that there are no more, and no other elements, than those which we have designated; and that these exhaust the capacity of human nature: thirdly, that there are not fewer than these; that is, that they are simple, indecomposable and irreducible into each other: fourthly, that they are not merely contemporaneous with each other—they are necessarily simultaneous; once formed, they exist together without the power of destroying each other, and constitute the essence, the eternal foundation of humanity: fifthly, that in the order of their developement, the element of philosophy comes necessarily, last: sixthly, that the philosophical element is superior to all the others; because, under its apparent obscurity, it conceals all veritable light; because, all specific as it is, it extends itself over all the other elements and embraces all; and finally, because, whilst it embraces them, it rules over them; and it rules

over them, because it explains them, without admitting of being itself explained by any of them, or indeed by any thing, other than itself.

Such are the results which a rapid examination of human nature has given us. To obtain them, what have we done ? We have observed, described, counted, the real facts which we have found within the soul, without omitting any, or taking any upon supposition : then, we observed their relations ; — their relations of resemblance, or dissimilitude ; and finally, we classed them, according to their relations. This is analysis applied to the soul, that is to say, psychological analysis. I think therefore, that the results which our last lecture gave us, are incontestable ; but have they all the evidence that can be desired ? The psychological method is the conquest of philosophy itself ; and it already holds in science, an undenied rank and authority, which must always be increasing. But is it not possible to add to this method another, not more certain, but more luminous ; which, without controlling the former, confirms it ? I will explain myself. What is psychological analysis ? It is the tardy, patient, minute observation, with the aid of consciousness, of facts concealed within the bosom of human nature. These facts are complicated, fugitive, obscure, and so deep within the interiors of the mind, that they are almost beyond the reach of apprehension ; the power of conscious-



ness, which is applied to them, is an instrument of extreme delicacy ; it is a microscope applied to things infinitely small. But, if human nature manifests itself in the individual, it manifests itself also, in the species. And what is there in the species ? What, but the same elements which belong to the individual ; with this difference only, that they are there developed on a larger scale, and are therefore more visible ? The developement of the human race in space and in time, is history. I say the developement, for there is no history of that, which does not develope itself. And what is the idea implied by that of developement ? The idea of progress. All history, then, implies a developement, a progressive march. Now, what is the progressive developement of the human race in history ? It is civilization. As many elements as there are in human nature, and in the individual ; as many as there are in the species ; so many, do history and civilization develope. It is wrong, and the same thing has been said in this place, better than I can say it again ; it is wrong, to ascribe to humanity, a character taken from any one particular point of view. To do so, is to act as if we were unwilling to permit civilization to reflect the whole of humanity ; and to act thus, consistently, is nothing less than to mutilate one of the aspects of human nature. The unity of civilization, is discoverable only in the unity of human nature ; its varieties,

in the variety of the elements of humanity. All that is in human nature, is therefore involved in the progress of civilization; I mean every thing that belongs to the foundations of human nature: for it is the highest excellence of history, to throw aside, whatever is not necessary, essential, and fundamental. Only that which is true, has a right to subsist, and to leave behind it, a sure memorial of itself. That which is but individual, glitters for a day, and is extinguished forever; or, at best, it reaches no farther than biography. Nothing endures, but that which is necessary: and history is occupied, only upon that which endures; and which, while it endures, organises, and develops itself, and obtains an historical existence. Therefore, as human nature is the matter and the basis of history, so history, is again the judge of human nature: and historical analysis is the counter proof of psychological analysis. For example; if, by psychological analysis, you should have found, in your own consciousness as an individual, an element, which you do not find again in history; that is, which the whole human race, in the course of two, three, or four thousand years have never developed; I would advise you strongly, to doubt the reality of that element: or, if you find, in history, an element which your psychological analysis has not given you; I would recommend to you, to reexamine that analysis. In a word, the certainty

of interior observation precedes that of history ; but the certainty of history, is a guarantee of the former. History is a representation of human nature on a great scale : and that, which is scarcely perceptible in consciousness, shines forth in history, in luminous characters.

I have interrogated the one ; and I now come to interrogate the other. I endeavored to demonstrate to you, in my last lecture, that philosophy had a real and incontestable existence in our consciousness ; today, I shall inquire, whether philosophy has had an historical existence : for if philosophy, after the lapse of three or four thousand years, has not yet existed ; there is some danger that it may never exist. But if we find that philosophy, like all the other elements of human nature, has, in the progress of civilization, always had an existence in history ; if it is developed *there*, precisely in the same manner as in consciousness ; if it sustains *there*, with the other elements of civilization, the same relations, which we have seen it sustain, with the other elements of consciousness ; then, gentlemen, we shall be certain that we are not examining chimeras : we shall feel, in all our farther advances, that we are walking upon solid ground ; we shall have the support of internal and external facts. Now, absolute truth is the identity of these two orders of truth.

Let us inquire then, if, up to this day, philosophy

has had any historical existence, and what this existence has been.

Do not expect that I shall exhibit to you a picture of civilization; I seek only to find in a corner of that picture, philosophy. I shall consider civilization only in this point of view. It is customary to begin history with hypothesis: to seek the history of religion, or of society, for instance, in the savage state; in that state, which historical criticism cannot reach: it is among the shadows which lie beyond all history, that the light is looked for which is to illuminate the actual history of civilization. I shall do otherwise: I shall commence with that which is now, proceeding to that which was before it; and thus, I shall at last arrive at that, which was in the beginning, and beyond which, neither history nor criticism can discover any monument of existence. Thus, whence comes modern history? It is clear, that there was something before it, and I need not insist upon demonstrating, that its real and well known roots lie in the Greek and Roman world: to this parentage all kinds of evidence lead us. And this world of classical antiquity, does it not suppose a previous world? Is it not evident, that, before that world, there was another, through which humanity had passed on its way to Greece and Rome? It is perfectly well known that, if the roots of the modern world lie in classical antiquity, those of classical antiquity may be found on the

coasts of Egypt, the plains of Persia, and the high lands of central Asia. It is evident, in a word, that the East preceded Greece. All evidence brings us to this ; but, does it carry us farther ? Who of us has secret memoirs of that which was before the East ? I declare for my own part, that I know of no civilization previous to this. With this, then, we must begin. Well, gentlemen, did there, or did there not, exist any philosophy in the East ?

The oriental world is vast ; it includes many different parts, which we must not confound with each other, and which, in their diversity, constitute the whole life of that world. But then, in all these diversities, there is a certain accordance ; and the oriental world, taken as a whole, has its fundamental character : this character is unity. All the elements of human nature exist in the East ; and they exist there in colossal proportions, but indistinct, dependent upon and enveloped within each other. A state of envelopement, the one within the other, of all the parts of human nature, is the specific character of the East. It is that of the organic infancy of the individual ; it is also necessarily that of the infancy of the human race. In fact, neither industry, nor art, were wanting in the East ; witness Babylon and Persepolis, the pyramids, the temples of upper Egypt, Sais and Thebes, and the gigantic monuments of the farther East. Nor were laws wanting there : indeed they were

so little wanting, that the human race were held motionless beneath them. The idea of religion is, as it were, the central idea of the East: art, the state, industry, every thing, formed itself around religion, for religion, and by religion. Examine the arts of the East; you will never find, in them, an individual aim, or character. The state was an avowed theocracy; all civil and political laws, were at the same time religious laws: and industry was so closely bound to the service and subjected to the rule of religion, that codes, at once political and religious, marked out its processes and its limits.

In such a world as that, what existence would be assigned to philosophy? It would of course, be obliged to submit to the condition, common to all the other elements which I have designated, that of 'being enveloped in them, and particularly in that element which bore sway among them, — in the element of religion.

Philosophy in the East was, generally speaking, the reflected light of religion. It need not be said that, in Egypt and Persia, philosophy never had an independent existence. These two great countries have left more sculptured than written monuments: a sure mark of the degree of civilization which they had reached, and of the strict dependence upon external form, in which thought was there held. In India, it is true, there was more independence.

Nevertheless, the whole Indian philosophy appears to me, to be nothing more than an interpretation, more or less free, of their religious books. It is acknowledged at the present day, that all the systems of Indian philosophy may be divided into two classes — the orthodox and the heterodox ; whence it appears that the Vedas always took the lead of philosophy, as the foundation of all truth, the authority of authorities, and the light of lights ; and that the human intellect had there, scarcely any other ambition, than to understand the Vedas. Subsequently, after the Buhddist reform, and particularly in China, philosophy was much more detached from religion. China always seems, among Eastern nations, like a world apart. But, as the Indian and Chinese monuments of Buhddism are but little known in Europe, or, at least, are not in circulation among the profane, and among philosophers, who are still in expectation of the great work which M. Abel Remusat is to publish on the history of the Buhddist religion and philosophy, I am compelled to confine myself to the data which I possess, and these data, scrupulously examined, seem to me to manifest a symbolic and religious character ; under which I recognise an incipient philosophy.

If, in the Eastern world, the condition of the existence of all the elements of human nature, was their envelopement ; its philosophy must have been

subject to the same condition: at the same time, there, also, the whole of human nature was present, and as philosophy has its place in human nature, it follows, that it had it also in the East: only, this place was necessarily great in appearance, but in reality, very small. And here we see the reason why two very contrary opinions may be formed of the East. A man habituated to modern analysis, as he looks upon their written or sculptured monuments which are still extant, is struck with the symbolic character every where manifest, and not yet wholly deciphered by us; and comprehending but little about it, he is tempted to regard all this symbolic apparatus, as the product of an imagination, which was undoubtedly great, but unmeasured and extravagant: and then, this old Eastern world, is charged with being but a mass of ridiculous superstitions. It is not remembered that, even in the East, there were men; and that, when we accuse, thus, a civilization which has endured long and still endures, we accuse a long age of the history of the human race. On the other hand, when we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East, especially those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe; we discover there so many truths, and truths so profound, and standing in so strong a contrast with those mean results which, in these latter days, have satisfied European genius, that we are tempted to bow the



knee before the genius of the East, and to see, in that cradle of mankind, the true home of philosophy. This is again an error ; truth is one thing, philosophy another : in this distinction, gentlemen, resides all true understanding, of the soul and of history. No epoch of humanity, not even a single human individual, whether the first or the last, has ever been cut off from the inheritance of truth. In fact, if you suppose that the last man only was in possession of truth, you propose a fearful problem, which it is not in your power to solve. What will you do with the first ? You must destroy him, or you must admit his existence in connexion with his race. Why should not *he* possess the same truth which the last generations have acquired ? Was it *his* fault that he came first ? Why then was truth, and by truth, I do not mean any particular conception of less or greater interest, but the most essential conceptions ; why were these necessary truths wanting to him ? No, gentlemen, they were not wanting to him. The first man was as much in possession of them, as the last comer into the human family ; but he possessed them not in the same manner. No privilege, no castes exist in human nature. Man is the equal of man ; and the only difference which exists, which *can* exist between man and man, is the difference of more or less, the difference of form. A peasant, the meanest of peasants, knows as much as Leib-

nitz, about himself, about the world and God, and about their relations ; but he does not possess the secret and the complete explication of his knowledge ; he knows not how to account for it : he possesses it, but he does not possess it in that superior form of thought, which we call philosophy. It is just so in the East. Although an independent philosophy, I repeat it emphatically, has never been wanting there ; yet we may say, that it was not granted to the first epoch of civilization, to possess the truth in that free and philosophical form, which was reserved for the second epoch.

In the East, every thing is enveloped ; philosophy, as well as all the other elements of humanity, exist there ; but its condition is that of envelopment. That is the general character of its existence ; although combined with strong symptoms, and with a manifest commencement of separation. That which was enveloped, was destined to be developed. The world takes one step forwards. Civilization descends from the centre of Asia, across the plains of Asia Minor and of the Nile, to the Mediterranean, and to the Coasts of Greece. The Mediterranean and Greece are as much the empire of liberty and of movement, as the elevated plateau of the Indo-Chinese world is the empire of immobility and of despotism. I say of immobility and of despotism, and I say it, without anger. It was indeed necessary, that the cradle of the

world should be firm and fixed, that it might bear within it, all the ulterior developements of human civilization. The child of a progress, Greece is herself necessarily progressive ; this is the first step of civilization. Here liberty commences upon a great scale. In Greece, all the elements of human nature are the same as in the East : they are the same, but their condition is new ; it is the condition of the general character of Greece, which is, movement. Every thing, therefore, is developed ; and consequently, every thing tends to separation : upon this theatre of movement and of life, — industry, the state, art, and religion, without ever being able to pass each other, march forward to independence.

The miracles of Grecian industry are familiar to you. It extended itself through nearly all the world then known. The laws of Greece and Rome, (and the Greek and Roman world are but one), have, nevertheless, a religious character ; but they are infinitely more independent of religion than the laws of the East. For instance, read and compare the laws of Menu and the Roman laws. In the laws of Menu, nothing is progressive ; for this would imply that the religion of an epoch is progressive ; but it can advance only on condition of metamorphosing and destroying itself. The Roman laws, which were subject to perpetual modifications, must, to have admitted of them, have

borne a religious character much less strongly marked ; although, I repeat, such a character was never absent from them, particularly in their beginning. As to the arts, who of you is ignorant of the contrast between those of Greece and those of the East ? The East possesses little or nothing of the art of painting ; for the slight and coarse representations, which I find scattered upon the monuments, which have reached this country, seem to me to prove nothing but the absence of the art of painting, or at best, its existence in its rudest infancy ; little sculpture, much architecture. Hence it appears that, in the East, art represents that which is fixed and impersonal ; whilst art in Greece, which, with architecture, combines much sculpture and a considerable amount of painting, represents particularly the person, the man. As religion in Greece is more anthropomorphic than in the East, so art in Greece is more personal. The step to anthropomorphism, gentlemen, is of immense importance. For anthropomorphism is as superior to the religions of nature as man is superior to nature ; and the passage from natural symbolism to anthropomorphic symbolism was an immense step towards the enfranchisement of thought. In Greece philosophy followed, and she followed necessarily, the same direction with all the other elements of civilization. Because there was more freedom in the play of the other elements, there

must have existed yet greater freedom in philosophy ; and we see that this was the case.

The roots of Greece and Rome are absolutely oriental. Language, writing, the alphabet, processes of industry and agriculture, mechanical arts, primitive forms of government, the primitive processes and characters of art, and the primitive forms of religion, all, all are oriental. It is upon this foreign basis that the Greek character was developed ; from this it departed to arrive at that original and admirable form, which we call emphatically the Greek form. It was just so in philosophy. Its earliest inspirations, perhaps afterwards some fortunate suggestions, came to it from the East ; but its development is altogether Greek. In Greece, as in the East, it commenced in a state of intermixture with religion. Afterwards it passed from the public religion into the mysteries. These mysteries were, in their origin, a conquest of the spirit of freedom. In fact, these mysteries already contained, as I conceive, explanations, rude and very unlike the subsequent philosophical explanations, but certainly attempts at explanation. Men endeavored, in them, to find a reason for the visible representations of public worship. From the mysteries, gentlemen, though you may not believe it, arose philosophy. The first Grecian philosophers had visited the East and been there initiated into the mysteries.

By degrees, after much feeling of the way, and many, more or less successful efforts, made in different parts of Greece, philosophy makes her appearance, and establishes herself in the very capital of Greece. It is there, that in the focus of an illumination constantly increasing, and with the rapid progress of the Greek character, she rejects every symbolic form, and assumes at length, that which is her own.

We know, and certainly, the very day, the month, the memorable year, when this great event was accomplished ; that is to say, when the change became conspicuously manifest, and began to pervade the whole Greek world. I have, at this moment, forgotten the day and the month, but it was in the 3d year of the 77th olympiad, that is 470 years before our era, that Socrates was born. Socrates is a personage, eminently historical. He represents indeed an idea which is of the highest elevation, the idea of philosophy ; that is to say, of reflection in itself : not of reflection applied to any one object in particular, but to all ; not of reflection terminating in any system ; but of reflection developing itself in freedom ; determining all systematic results, and I had almost said, seeking none. There is not, gentlemen, a Socratic system, but there is a Socratic spirit. Socrates did not teach such or such a truth ; he has not left his name attached to any particular theory. What then has he done ?

Without being a skeptic, he doubted, and he taught to doubt. He addressed the working man, the jurispudent, the artist, the minister of religion, the sophist, and demanded of them all, to render him an account of their own thoughts. He roused the mind, and made it fertile by his examination; he asked of himself and of others, only self-understanding. To listen to and understand ourselves; to be manifest to ourselves; to know what we truly say and think; this was the object of Socrates: a negative object undoubtedly; but this was only the beginning, not the consummation of philosophy. What was the result of this? Socrates produced not a system, but an immense movement; a movement of reflection; and, as reflection goes on, well or ill, without ceasing to be the same, and as it leads either to good or bad consequences; we find in this quality, the explanation of the singular phenomenon—that in the Socratic school, were found Aristippus, as well as Plato; Epicurus, as well as Zenon; who all assumed to be legitimate children of Socrates; and they were all right. They all agreed in this particular, which combined them into unity;—they all reflected, made free use of thought, and endeavored to understand themselves. They understood themselves, each in his own way; and of course, very differently. In the beginning this was inevitable; afterwards it was useful; and so far from producing a rupture between them, it

caused a richer developement of the only true philosophical unity — that of free reflection.

Ten centuries were required to exhaust the Socratic movement; it is the glory of that great man, that he did not give his name to any one moment, but to the whole of that immense movement; and that he was, in regard to form, as truly the father of the last philosophers of the sixth and seventh centuries, as of those who went forth directly from under his hands. The philosophy of Socrates has undergone many vicissitudes. After having separated, with some violence, from the established forms of religion; it returned to them again, under the auspices of men, who were far better acquainted with the subject than Socrates; and who, in returning into an accordance with the mysteries and with religion, knew, perfectly well, what they were doing. Nor were they, for this, any the less philosophers. And why? Because they knew what they did; and this implies that they *willed* to do as they did; and that reflection, and their idea of philosophy, led them, whither they consented to go. Thus, the Neoplatonic School, which was a legitimate descendant from Plato, made their peace with that pagan symbolism, which caused Socrates to be put to death. They who defended expiring paganism, and combated by the side of Julian, were disciples, and successors, of those very men, who issued from the school of Socrates; and who, after



having lost their master by the great catastrophe which you well know, found it very difficult to escape, themselves. What they rejected, from reflection, these others admired, from reflection: and in this consists the unity of the Greek philosophy, from the 470th year before our era, until the year 529, under the consulate of Decius; when the last school of philosophy was closed, by the decree of Justinian, in that very Athens, where the first school arose. It is thus, that we know, with singular accuracy, what it is always important to know, the beginning and the end of this great movement.

Let us pass on to modern history. In my estimation, the Greek and Roman world shone during thirteen or fourteen centuries; and was then eclipsed, for ever. This is an existence, infinitely inferior to that of the East; and no one of you, if I have made myself understood, can fail to perceive the cause, the necessary cause of this. The epoch of the world which represents immobility, should represent it constantly, and remain, itself immovable; duration is its character. That epoch of the world which is to represent movement must have less of duration, and more of life. The Greek and Roman epoch is therefore much shorter than the oriental epoch.

Who knows how long our own will endure? We are but of yesterday. Human civilization is

not young ; but modern history is very young ; and modern philosophy is still younger. If this idea is not favorable to presumption, it is very favorable to hope ; for all, that is not behind us, is before us ; and it is better to have a future, than a past.

There are two epochs in modern history, and but two ; the epoch of envelopement and that of developement. The middle age was but the painful, slow, and bloody formation of all the elements of modern civilization ; I say the formation, not the developement. In the middle age, as in Greece, as in the East, all the elements of human nature were, and could not but be, present. The middle age belongs to humanity, as well as Greece and the East. All human elements existed there, together ; but, they were scarcely distinguishable, and were compounded with the dominant element of that age. In fact, in every epoch there is, and must needs be, some dominant element, which does not exclude the others, but envelopes them. The dominant element of the middle age was Christianity. It is Christianity which has civilized the modern world ; and nearly ten centuries were needed, to give to our civilization a fixed and firm foundation. It was Christianity, which first excited industry ; which formed the state after its own image, which created art, and gave birth to philosophy : I speak now of that very celebrated, though little known philosophy, which is called the scholastic philoso-

phy. As the oriental philosophy had, for its original foundation, the Vedas ; as the Greek philosophy sprang from the mysteries ; so, the philosophy of the middle age is founded upon the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, and the sovereign decisions of the Church : and again, as the unity of the middle age consists in the organization and progressive domination of the Church ; so, the unity and fundamental character of the scholastic philosophy, consists in this, that it acts within a circle which it had not itself traced, but to which it was confined by an authority different from its own. Humanity was present in the middle ages with all its energy ; and although it then appeared under the most perfect religious form, yet the necessity of its nature compelled it, to seek to account to itself for this form. Thence arose by degrees a more methodic and regular course of religious instruction in the cloisters ; and afterwards, universities and the scholastic philosophy. In that philosophy are the most diverse systems, pushed to the boldest extremes. Reasoning was apparently conducted in the middle age, with an astonishing degree of freedom. You know the quarrels of the nominalists, of the realists, and of the conceptionalists : if you were better acquainted with the details, I could better sketch for you, the general characters which represent them. Let it suffice to say, that the scholastic sects were more numerous

than all the Greek sects, and than the Indian and Chinese sects. Moreover, gentlemen, there is much truth in the scholastic philosophy; and as, at the present day, we have begun to study with ardor, indeed with passion, that middle age which from the first moment of our emancipation, has been constantly accused, reproached and condemned; so, it is possible, nay, (considering that men are always inclined to go from one extreme to the other, and that this is the inevitable course of natural events,) it is probable that when the scholastic philosophy begins to be examined, we shall be so much astonished at finding it both comprehensible and very ingenious, as to pass at once into admiration. If I profess to believe that every truth is contained within Christianity, I must also believe that every explanation of Christianity, be it what it may, must contain some profound truths; and you do not see in me, an enemy of the scholastic philosophy. Nevertheless, it is not I, but human nature, which says that that thought, whose action is limited by a circle which it did not trace and cannot pass, may indeed contain all truth; but that is not yet, thought in that state of absolute freedom, which characterizes philosophy, properly so called. Hence scholastics are so far from being, in my opinion, the last perfection of philosophy, that, strictly speaking, they do not constitute what I understand by philosophy.

As we know the day, the month and the year, when Greek philosophy came into the world ; so we know with the same certainty, and with even more of detail, the day and the year, when modern philosophy was born. Do you know how long it is since it was born ? Gentlemen, you are to convince yourselves by the very fact of the youth, of the childhood, of that philosophical spirit which, at the present day, animates all Europe. The father of one of your fathers, might have seen him who gave to the world, modern philosophy. What was the name, what the country of this new Socrates ? He would belong necessarily, to that country which had advanced farthest upon the path of European civilization. He would write, not in the dead language which the Latin church employed in the middle ages, but in a living language, destined to serve future generations ; in that language which is called, perhaps, to decompose all others, and which is now accepted from one end of Europe to the other. This man, gentlemen, was a Frenchman ; he was Descartes. His first work, written in French, was published in 1637. It is, then, from 1637 that modern philosophy dates. And what is the title of this eminently historical work ? It is "Method." I said to you that Socrates had no system, and it is of little consequence that Descartes had one. The invention of Descartes which belongs to history, is that of his method.

Socrates, was free reflection ; Descartes, is reflection raised to the dignity of a method, and, what is more, of method in its severest form. He commences by doubting every thing, the existence of the world, of God, even of himself ; and he does not stop until he reaches that which he cannot doubt without ceasing to doubt at all, by doubting the existence of that which doubts within him, viz. the existence of thought. Between the reflection of Socrates, and the method of Descartes, there intervenes an abyss of two thousand years ; there is a less interval, but as great a difference, between a certain Indian system which I shall examine hereafter, and the dialectics of Socrates, of Plato and of Aristotle. The Greek system of dialectics exceeds by far, that of Niaya in its sincerity, seriousness and depth ; but the method of Descartes, is as much superior to the processes of the spirit of that ancient day, as our civilization is superior to that of Greece. Descartes has, without doubt, a system ; but this is not what constitutes his principal glory ; his glory (like that of Socrates) consists in having given to the modern world, a philosophical spirit, which has produced, and will yet produce, a thousand systems. “*De la methode,*” (concerning method) ; such is the title, now so simple, but then a prodigy, under which Descartes gave to the world his thoughts.

He was a gentleman of Brittany, a military man, possessing, in a high degree, our qualities and our

defects ; clear, firm, resolute, somewhat rash, thinking in his closet, as intrepidly as he fought under the walls of Prague. He had made war as an amateur, and he philosophized after the same fashion. Wholly without ambition, he had left his country, not as is commonly believed, upon compulsion, but voluntarily. He was rich and of good family. Cardinal de Richelieu, who loved Corneille and judged men accurately, offered or promised him a pension ; it is true, however, that he never received it. Protected, as he was, by Father Mersenne, he might, with some precautions, have been sure of success at home. But he loved better to travel about at random, to wander in Italy, and talk with Galileo, and afterwards, to bury himself in a village in Holland, and go to leave his bones in the north, without any wish to form a sect ; philosophizing, for the sake of philosophy, and reflecting, for the sake of reflection ; exclusively occupied with the necessity of understanding himself, of finding an explanation of his knowledge, satisfactory to himself, and of seeing clearly into all things. He valued his method far more than his celebrated discoveries ; so much so, that in a posthumous work which I have published, he laughs at them who imagine that his physical and mathematical discoveries constituted the chief occupation of his life. He says to them, “ you do not understand my thoughts : I have made my dis-

coveries, only to exercise my method ; if they have any value, conclude that my method also has its value, and apply it anew to whatever you will, mathematics or physics." Even the application of algebra to geometry was invented by him, as it were, by way of amusement ; his method was what he always had at heart, and to that he always returned. It is the last, as it is also the first word of his writings.

The spirit of philosophy introduced into the modern world, in 1637, (and we are now speaking in 1828) has not ceased to be progressive. And it has developed itself with that progress, which might have been anticipated, by comparing the movement of the modern world with that of the Greek world and that of the Eastern world. And in the course of one century, it seems to me, that philosophical systems were not wanting in Europe. No, they were not wanting ; it is strange, however, that modern philosophy is charged with losing itself in a labyrinth of systems ; truly, there is something of severity in bringing this accusation against such an infant. I would remark, that so far from being lost in a chaos of systems, although not wanting in philosophical fecundity, it has never produced more than two or three great schools. It is still, if we may so speak, in swaddling clothes. We may undoubtedly be proud of what it has already accomplished ; but we may also reckon with cer-



tainty upon that which it will do, that which it is called to do. From the first man who interpreted the Vedas, to the last Indo-Chinese philosopher, oriental philosophy never recoiled. From Socrates to Proclus, the Grecian philosophy never receded ; nor, in like manner, will modern philosophy ever retrace her steps, from Descartes to future generations. Observe, that modern philosophy, like Greek philosophy, has its unity. Indeed its unity appears to me to be far more striking than its diversity. This unity is, and cannot but be, the point common to all philosophies ; that is, the use of reason with absolute freedom. It may be said, that this advantage was not wanting to the thinkers of the middle age. Saint Thomas, Abelard, Eri-gena, were, it is true, original and rash spirits ; but in their boldest flights, they kept constantly in view the limits which ecclesiastical authority had traced for them ; and they remained within these limits, or at least pretended to do so. At the present day emancipation is complete. A sort of apparent skepticism reigns in the philosophy of our age ; a spirit, negative to excess, which betrays at once a predominating desire for reflection, and the infancy of the art of reflecting. This phenomenon is by no means new. In the beginning of the Greek philosophy, between Pericles and Alexander, the negative spirit, although strongly repressed by two men of genius so profoundly positive as

Plato and Aristotle, was nevertheless fashionable ; even so, since Descartes, the spirit of negation, especially in France, has checked the flight of the higher philosophy. There is nothing in this which should astonish or alarm us. Every great change in the spirit of humanity commences by hostility ; but this is only the point of departure of great movements, and not their end. The petty chicaneries of the day, (if you will permit me to use this expression,) against all which is most holy and most venerable, will gradually give way to the veritable spirit of our epoch. In the habitual exercise of freedom, we shall lay aside these narrow and pusillanimous habits. When we shall no longer feel as freed men, but as freemen, we shall cease to think of turning that liberty, of which we shall then possess a full and entire consciousness, against any thing whatsoever that is great and noble. We shall content ourselves with the exercise of liberty ; and the barrenness of a criticism that is confined to minute particulars, will give way to positive, large, and fertile views.

Remember that nothing goes back, every thing advances. Philosophy gained in passing from the East into Greece ; it gained immensely, in passing from Greece to modern Europe ; it cannot but gain, in future. I have endeavored to show you, in my last lecture, that philosophy is, if I may so express myself, the culminating point of individual thought ;

today you have seen that the part which philosophy has acted, in the three great epochs of the history of the world, became, successively, more and more important. I trust that a futurity, as yet wholly unknown to us, awaits us, in which the spirit of philosophy will extend and develope itself still more : and that, as it is the highest and last development of human nature, the final accomplishment of human thought ; so it will constitute the final accomplishment of the human race, and the culminating point of history. In the East, among a hundred thinking beings, who, in consequence of being able to think, were certainly in possession of truth, there was one (I use numbers by way of illustration) who sought to account to himself for his perceptions of truth, and to understand his own thoughts. Following out this calculation, in Greece there were perhaps three. At this day, even in the infancy of modern philosophy, we may say, there are probably seven or eight, who seek to comprehend themselves, who reflect. The number of thinkers, of free spirits, of philosophers, will increase unceasingly until they predominate and become the majority of the human race. But not tomorrow, gentlemen, will that day shine forth upon the world.

Let us indulge no presumptuous spirit ; for we are, I repeat it, we are but of yesterday, and have advanced but a short distance ; let us, however,

confide in futurity, and therefore bear the present with patience. There will always exist, in the human race, great and compact bodies of men; we must not attempt to decompose and to dissolve them, prematurely. Philosophy, in the great body of the people, exists under the primitive, profoundly impressive and venerable form of religion, and of worship. Christianity is the philosophy of the people. He who now addresses you sprang from the people and from Christianity: and I trust you will always recognise this, in my profound and tender respect for all that is of the people and of Christianity. Philosophy is patient; she knows what was the course of events in former generations, and she is full of confidence in the future; happy in seeing the great bulk of mankind in the arms of Christianity, she offers, with modest kindness, her hand to Christianity, to assist her in ascending to a yet loftier elevation.

A man, whom rare virtues and a high political capacity recommended to all but those who are too blind to see honorable qualities in their adversaries, M. Serre, in 1820, when the progress of the spirit of liberty assumed an aspect perhaps a little threatening, exclaimed, with a pathetic accent, "Democracy flows on with a full stream." A man, whose virtues were not less pure, and whose political abilities were no less conspicuous, and who combined with these qualities an admirable

insight into the spirit of the present times, replied to him, "If by democracy you understand that progress of industry, art, law, manners, and light, which has now for some centuries been constantly increasing, I am well pleased with such democracy; and, for my own part, instead of blaspheming the age in which I live, I feel grateful to Providence for having assigned my birth to an epoch in which God has been pleased to call a greater number of his creatures than heretofore, to a participation in the virtues, the intelligence, and the manners which had been hitherto reserved for but few." In quoting from memory, I spoil the beautiful language of M. Roger Collard; but I am sure that I do not misinterpret his meaning, that I am true to the spirit of his thought. We often, at the present day, hear sorrowing lamentations uttered over the increasing progress of the spirit of philosophy, which is said to dissolve and to grind into dust the political and religious faith of modern Europe. In the first place, I do not see this dissolution, nor do I believe in it. I have seen something of Europe, and I say she is *not* near her dissolution. But there is, and I acknowledge it, a great advancement and a perpetual progress, of the spirit of philosophy;—that is, of reflection applied to every thing. The human race is, this day, assuming the robe and ensigns of virility; it has determined to see clearly into more things than one, which have hitherto been

kept in darkness, by the respect for former ages. I confess I am myself among the number of those whom such an exhibition fills with gratitude to the providence of God, for having given them birth in an epoch, wherein it has pleased him gradually to elevate to the highest degree of intelligence, a greater number than ever of their fellow men.

After having endeavored in these two lectures to vindicate philosophy, in the first by analysis, in this by history ; I propose to present, in the next lecture, some reflections on the history of philosophy.



## LECTURE III.

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Recapitulation of the two last lectures. A word upon the method employed. Subject of this lecture;— the application to the history of philosophy, of what has been said of philosophy itself. 1st. That the history of philosophy is a specific and real element of universal history, like the history of legislation, of the arts and of religion. 2d. That the history of philosophy is clearer than all other parts of history, and contains their explanation. Logical demonstration of this. Historical demonstration. Explanation of Indian civilization by philosophy. The Bhagavad-Gita. Greece. Explanation of the age of Pericles by the philosophy of Socrates. Modern history. Explanation of the 16th century, by the philosophy of Descartes. Of the 18th, by that of Condillae and Helvetius. 3d. That the history of philosophy appears last in the developement of historical labors, because philosophy is the last degree of the interior developement of the mind, and of the developement of an epoch. Relation of the history of philosophy to history in general. In the East, no history, and consequently no history of philosophy. In Greece. With the moderns. Favorable position of our age in regard to the history of philosophy.

GENTLEMEN, —

In my first lecture I endeavored to demonstrate that philosophy is a specific want, an incontestable element of human nature; and that this element, as real as the rest, is superior to them all; inasmuch as, containing all light within itself, it throws its



light upon all the other elements, and explains them all. In my last lecture, I summoned history to the aid of analysis, and demonstrated, that civilization, the visible image of human nature, includes, in every epoch, a philosophic element ; which maintains, with the other elements of civilization, exactly the same relations which the philosophic element we have recognised and designated in individual consciousness, maintains there, with the other elements of human nature. Thus far have we advanced ; and I now call your attention to the method which has brought us hither, and will preside over the whole of my instruction.

I should be glad to present to you, here, some important and little known truths. I should rejoice still more if I could establish in your minds that which is superior to any particular truth, viz. method. For method, while it will assure you of the exactness of the truths which I shall develop before you, will, at the same time, give you the means of rectifying the numerous errors which will doubtless escape me, and of finding, for yourselves, new truths. This is to be, specifically, a course of method ; and the method which, as I said before, shall preside over my instruction, is the identity of psychology and history.

After having vindicated philosophy, I come, today, to vindicate the history of philosophy ; I come to apply, to the history of philosophy, all that

I have said of philosophy itself; to recommend it to you on the same ground; and to demonstrate that it maintains, with the other branches of the universal history of humanity, the same relations which philosophy maintains with the other elements of civilization and humanity. This lecture will, therefore, be only a corollary, a developement, of the two former.

In the first place it is very plain that, if philosophy be a real element, a fundamental want of humanity, the different ways in which men have successively satisfied this want, according to times and places, and the developements which this element has received in the course of ages, deserve to be verified, collected, and reproduced. That, in a word, the history of philosophy, like the history of industry, of legislation, of the arts, or of the different religions, ought to hold its own appropriate place in the general history of humanity.

I hesitate to go on; but, it is not I, it is the most common logic, which draws, from the premises we have established, this conclusion. If it is true, as we have demonstrated, that the philosophic element in human nature is superior to all its other elements; I say, with some hesitation, but I am compelled to say, that the history of philosophy is equally superior to all the other elements of the history of humanity. And its superiority consists in possessing the same advantages which

recommend philosophy, to wit, in being more clear than all the other branches of history ; and if these lend to it their light, it returns to them another light, far more vivid and penetrating, which illustrates their profoundest depths, and throws a radiance, like that of the noon-day sun, on every part of universal history.

To say, that the history of philosophy is more clear than political history, than that of the arts or of the religions, may, I admit, appear paradoxical. This, however, is a necessary consequence of the proposition which has been established in the first lecture, to wit, that all clearness is given by ideas. Philosophical abstractions have not this reputation. I acknowledge it ; but, gentlemen, this is mere ingratitude ; for, at bottom, we rest all our faith upon the very abstractions which we thus accuse ; we believe only them, we comprehend only them, and it is in them and by them that we comprehend every thing. Let us take an example of a truth, at once very abstruse, and of a very low degree. Here, gentlemen, are two positive objects, very real, very determinate, with nothing abstract about them, two concrete quantities ; and here are two others. In the presence of these two groups of concrete and very different quantities, whatsoever they may be, I affirm, and we all affirm, that their numerical relation is a relation of equality. Well, then, I ask you, whether this truth, this relation,

lies within the sphere of any truths determinable by the concrete existence of these objects, or whether it is independent thereof? Deny, if you can, that two are equal to two? I ask you, whether you then would feel yourselves authorized to assert, that these two concrete quantities are equal to those two concrete quantities? No, gentlemen, you would not; and hence it is evident, that it is the abstract thought which elucidates the concrete. Understand me well, gentlemen; I do not say that abstraction is the first act of the human mind; that, first of all, it possesses, in itself, a clear and perfect intelligence of the abstract relations of numbers, and that, armed with this intelligence, it approaches sensible objects and concrete quantities, and determines their relations. Certainly not; I maintain, that, at the sight of these concrete quantities, the senses and the imagination receive impressions from whatever has determinate existence in these concretes; but that the relation of equality cannot possibly be perceived by the senses and the imagination, because it is invisible, intangible, and without any concrete existence; and I maintain, that it is the mind, which either knows or is ignorant of this relation; because it is the mind which is endowed with the faculty of perceiving the relations of numbers. But the mind perceives them only when, and on condition that, concrete quantities representing them, have been presented to the

senses. It is the mind, I repeat, which *then* perceives the abstract relation represented by the concrete quantities ; so that, in consequence of a complex operation, the mystery of which is the mystery of the connexion between our sensual and intellectual natures, we are enabled to affirm that these two concrete quantities and these two concrete quantities are numerically equal. Now, as it is the mind, and not the senses, which perceives this relation ; so the truth, the relation, which is perceived, is perceived in the abstract, and not in the concrete ; and we admit the relation of the concrete quantities, only because we admit the relation of quantities in themselves abstract ; and as soon as we have, by reflection, disengaged our notions of abstract relations from our notions of determinate objects, in which they were enveloped, we become conscious that, in regard to truths of this kind, we have reached the source of light. All truths of this kind, therefore, are perceived in the abstract. Let us take another example. Let us suppose that a certain phenomenon occurs at this moment ; that a certain change in things positive, determinate, and concrete, is observed to have taken place at the very instant in which we are now speaking. There is not one of you who does not instantly suppose that this change could *not* have taken place without some cause, which itself must have been determinate, positive, and concrete.

We should all of us form the same supposition. Whenever any phenomenon appears to us, such is our nature, that we cannot but suppose the existence of a cause which makes it appear, and to which we refer it. Now in what external things, in what visible phenomena, is the relation to which we refer—the relation of cause and effect—to be found? We are no longer permitted, Hume having disposed of that question, to suppose that any thing in the phenomena of sense, which is determinate, visible, or concrete, contains within itself the relation of an effect to a cause; it has been proved that the phenomena of sense furnish us only with ideas of a fortuitous conjunction, or an accidental connexion: we see a ball, for instance, which is in motion immediately after being struck by another ball; a motion which takes place, and then another which succeeds it, in time, and in space. The relation of cause and effect is nevertheless there, and every human being is irresistibly compelled to place it there. It is there; but it is not the senses which discover its presence, it is the mind: and on the other hand, the sensible and concrete phenomenon does not constitute it; it is precisely the abstraction of the principle in which its essence and its force reside; and here again, abstract truth sustains and vouches for that truth which we meet with in what is concrete. Once more; abstraction is not the first act of intelligence; because the first act of intelli-

gence is not reflection. But it is abstraction which, without the knowledge of intelligence, governs it ; and when reflection has separated the true light of intelligence, from those apparent lights which render it indistinct, its evidence is such, that intelligence neither asks nor admits any other. In the visible world, there is a higher arithmetic and geometry, which it contains but does not constitute ; an arithmetic and a geometry, altogether abstract, which the eye of the true geometrician perceives, and *in which* he, with far greater propriety, may be said to see nature, rather than to see it *in nature*. As to Aristotle, the abstract principle of causality, invisible and unimaginable, and purely intelligible, the category of cause in its abstraction, is the secret of the inmost life of nature, and of these very phenomena of movement, by which it is at once manifested and veiled. All light, as well as all truth, is therefore in abstraction ; that is to say, in reflection ; that is to say again, in philosophy. I hasten to come to history.

In history also, gentlemen, there are two elements. There are important events which are accomplished, sometimes on fields of battle and sometimes in cabinets ; there are movements more or less considerable in industry ; there are master-pieces of different arts ; there is the reign, sometimes of one religion, and sometimes of another. Herein consists the external, and if we may so call

it, the concrete element of history. The mode of thought prevalent in an epoch is doubtless present there; but it is present under forms which, whilst they manifest it, express it with little fidelity. For each of these forms expresses it, and can express it only after its own manner; that is, in a specific, determinate, and by consequence, a confined manner; so that there is a necessary contradiction between the mode of thought itself, and the form which represents it. But philosophy disengages thought itself from every external form. It consists in the identity of the subject with the object of thought; in the absolute identity of thought taking itself as the terminus of its own action. In philosophy there is no longer a foreign form; consequently there is no longer a bounded and confined form; consequently again, all contradiction is taken away. Finally, philosophy is reflection; reflection is self-consciousness in its utmost distinctness. Thus, it is in its philosophy, that the mode of thought prevalent in an epoch is first distinctly perceived. There only it displays a knowledge of itself. Elsewhere it does not know itself; it exists undoubtedly, but is in respect to itself, as if it were not. Philosophy is therefore the internal element, the abstract element, the ideal element, the reflective element, the highest and the most vivid consciousness of an epoch. In every epoch of civilization, one obscure, inmost, profound principle of thought



is predominant, which develops itself as it can in the external element of that epoch, in its laws, its arts, and its religion; these are its symbols, more or less clear, which it traverses successively to return to itself; and to acquire a consciousness and complete comprehension of itself, after having consummated its whole developement. Now it acquires this consciousness and this comprehension only in philosophy. Go through the annals of civilization, and you will find that it is always the philosophy of an epoch, which completely contains its predominant mode of thought, which disengages it from its political and religious veils, and, if we may so speak, assumes the task of translating it into an abstract, clear, and precise formula. Choose at pleasure any one epoch of the history of humanity; take away from it philosophy, take away from it all the light which you owe to your recollections of the philosophy of that epoch, and you will find it become exceedingly obscure; on the other hand, if you give back to it its philosophic element, you restore to it explanation and light.

Go to the East; and as a limit to your horizon, to India. Cast your eyes over the universal symbolism which is every where obvious, and every where doubtless expressive; and seek with candor and sincerity, what it expresses; what it is that is told by this history, at once political and mytho-

logical, and, like eternity, without chronology ; what it is that these monuments of art and of religion, so strange, so indefinite, so extravagant in appearance, signify. Beneath all this there is, undoubtedly, some idea ; but what is it ? For myself, I confess that very often, notwithstanding some preliminary studies, as I consider anew the monuments of this ancient civilization, my opinions bend, and are troubled. But I need only read some pages of a philosophical work of that period, and at once, order, clearness, and precision, return into my thoughts. A great and sure light spreads over this mysterious civilization ; and the whole spirit of its worship, of its arts, and of its laws, reflected upon this single point, is wholly revealed.

Open, for instance, the Bhagavad-Gita ; it is a short episode in an immense poem. Two great armies, the Pandoos and the Kouroos, are in the presence of each other, and are ready to engage in battle. A boundless carnage is at hand. In one of the two armies there is a young warrior, individually very brave, but who, upon the eve of shedding the blood of his relations and friends, for the two armies are composed of friends and relations, finds his courage failing. He requests another personage to advance his chariot into the middle of the plain, for the purpose of ascertaining the situation of affairs, and having cast a brief glance upon the two hosts, the good Ardschunas avows to

Crishna, his uncertainty. What is the reply ? “Truly, Ardschunas, your pity is exceedingly ridiculous. Why do you speak of friends and of relations ? Why of men ? Relations, friends, men, beasts, or stones, all are one. A perpetual and eternal energy has created all which you see and renews it without cessation. What is today a man, was yesterday a plant, and tomorrow may become a plant once more. The principle of every thing is eternal ; what value has aught else ? You are, as a Schatrias, a man of the caste of warriors, doomed to the combat. Therefore, do battle ; a fearful carnage will be the result. Be it so ; tomorrow the sun will shine upon the world, and will illuminate new scenes, and the eternal principle will continue to subsist. Beyond this principle, every thing is illusion. The fundamental error is, to consider as true that which is only apparent. If you attach any value to appearances, you deceive yourself ; if you attach it to your actions, you deceive yourself again ; for as all is illusion, action itself, when it is regarded as real, is illusion also ; the beauty and the merit of an action consist in performing it with profound indifference as to the results which it may produce. It is necessary to act, undoubtedly, but to act as if one acted not. Nothing exists but the eternal principle ; being, in itself. It follows that it is the supreme of wisdom to let things pass, to do what we

are compelled to do, but as if we did it not, and without concerning ourselves about the result, interiorly motionless, with our eyes fixed unceasingly upon the absolute principle which alone exists with a true existence.”

Such, under a somewhat occidental form, is the philosophy of this sublime episode. Now, with this torch in our hands, let us examine that which formerly appeared so obscure, and the darkness will at least become visible. You will comprehend how human nature must tremble and shrink into nothingness, before a theism so terrible and filled with chimeras, and represented by symbols that are extravagant and gigantic; how art, in its powerless endeavor to represent being in itself, must fall, without reserve, into colossal and irregular creations; how God being all and man nothing, a formidable theocracy must press upon humanity, take away all liberty, all movement, all practical interest, and consequently all true morality; and how man, despising himself, was unable to recall the memory of actions in which he supposed himself not the real agent; and therefore, why there is no history of man in India, and no chronology.

From the East, gentlemen, pass into Greece. Place yourselves in the age of Pericles, for instance, and there compare, in point of clearness, the external events, the legislative measures, the works of art, the representations of religion, with those ap-

parently unintelligible abstractions, which are called philosophy ; and mark, from which side comes forth the strongest light upon the spirit of that great age.

Pericles enacted a law, providing that all the soldiers of the land and sea forces should receive pay. What means this law ? On reflection, we see that it perfectly accords with the dictatorship of Pericles, who, in procuring the passage of such a law under his administration, attached to himself the army and navy. On further reflection, we find other modes of viewing this law, and of understanding the purpose of its author. But considered in itself, what light can it throw upon the epoch of which it forms a part ? What important illustration does it afford to the other elements of that epoch ? What aid to the history of art, or to that of the Athenian religion ?

Let us change the example. Take some work of art of that epoch, take that beautiful statue in the Royal Museum — the Pallas, which is called the Pallas of Velletri, and may be referred to the age of Pericles. If you examine it closely, and compare it with other statues analogous to it, which the Greek chisel produced an age or two before that of Pericles, you will find between them a striking difference. In the latter, you will find the arms pressed close to the body, the feet joined together, a stiffness, an absence of life and motion, in a word, a general aspect in perfect contrast with that which

this admirable statue presents at the first glance. It is still compact, somewhat massive, above the ordinary size, and finished in a style of great severity; but the feet are already sufficiently separated, and there is nothing in its position to prevent its walking. The drapery marks, without effort, the different parts of the body; we feel that a living being is beneath. One arm bears the egis, and the other, that sign of all activity and energy — the lance. In its features, and upon its brow, lies calm and profound thought; we see that it is not a woman; but we see also that it is not a divinity indifferent to humanity, a mere essential quality of being; but something at once human and super-human, which has consciousness, and power, and knowledge, and will, and action. We need no profound study to be struck with this character of the Pallas; particularly by its contrast with earlier analogous works; nevertheless I am not sure that I do not borrow something in my manner of conceiving the Pallas, from my philosophical studies. This is so much the more probable, as there still exist disputes concerning this statue, as well as concerning the law of Pericles.

Examine that form of religion, which of all those of Greece is most intelligible, the religion of the city of intelligence, of Athens, the worship of Minerva; bring before you, if not its monuments, at least those descriptions of them which remain to us.

They say, that every year in the great Panathenean rites, they carried in procession to the Acropolis, a symbolic vessel covered with a mysterious veil, upon which were figured the actions of the goddess ; for instance her victory over the Titans, sons of the earth. We can, particularly at the present day, clearly perceive something within these symbolical representations ; we see there the idea of conflict between moral force and physical force ; that this Pallas is not an astronomical symbol like the Egyptian deities, and that this is not a religion of nature ; that there are here allusions to civilization and laws. All this is seen ; but so obscurely, that in one of Plato's dialogues, Socrates declares that he comprehends nothing from all these fabulous representations ; and addressing himself to a minister of that religion, he asks him if he understands any thing from such tales. Socrates inquires of him also concerning another religious ritual, the worship of Jupiter ; in which it is said that Jupiter, to punish some wicked action of his father Saturn, had mutilated him ; this is a kind of mythological drama, whence the interlocutor of Socrates, (Euthyphron) having some reason to blame some action of his father, concluded that he could not better imitate Jupiter, than by accusing his father before the tribunal of justice, and demanding his death. We see here how Euthyphron understood the worship of Jupiter. Socrates had

the candor to acknowledge that he comprehended nothing about it. At this day we understand it better. Nevertheless, has the criticism of symbols succeeded in dissipating all the obscurity which rested upon this subject ?

On the other hand, take the philosophy of Socrates. He has no system ; but he gives directions for thinking. If he does not trace out for thought its whole career, he at least determines its point of departure, which is reflection applied to all things, but principally and first, to human nature. The study of human nature, the knowledge of ourselves, is, according to Socrates, the true beginning of philosophy ; whilst before him, the Pythagoreans placed all philosophy in theology, and the Ionians in physics. Socrates was the first to demonstrate that, if man stands in relation with the world and with God, it is by virtue of his own nature, and by the laws of his nature ; that this nature, therefore, ought to be investigated first of all ; so that, when once the nature of human beings is well known to us, we may be better able to ascertain their true relations to other beings who are not known to us — to the world and to God. In a word, Socrates added psychology to theology and cosmology, or substituted it for them. Thus, without mystery and without disguise, behold a free being, a being in possession of voluntary movement ; a personal being, a social and progressive being, capable of



foreseeing, and of willing, and of executing his will ; capable of energy and of wisdom ; in a word, behold *man* ; — hitherto neglected and unnoticed by physics and theology, but now established as the beginning and the centre of all study ; constituted a being of infinite price in his own sight, and the most worthy object of thought. It is this, which the Socratic philosophy declares categorically, in the severe and lucid formulas of metaphysical abstraction. This abstraction throws a boundless light upon the whole of that age which could produce it. With it, nothing is more intelligible than the age of Pericles. If the general labor of the epoch resulted in the creation of psychology, we must necessarily suppose that the ruling idea of psychology, the importance of human personality, presided over the formation of that epoch, and over the organization of all the elements of which it is composed. How many things do you then understand, which previously were incomprehensible enigmas. It is clear that the fundamental idea of the age which created psychology must have been the grandeur of personality in all its forms, in every degree ; in heaven as on earth ; in religion, and art, and law, as in philosophy. Whenever personality becomes the object of philosophic research, and the study of the personal character of man begins to be considered as immensely important ; it is because the age of

personality is come; then be sure that the gods, before whom this personality will bend the knee, must be themselves, more or less personal; be sure that the representations of art, will no longer fall into excesses of extravagant exaggeration, but will possess that character of definiteness, of the finite even in the bosom of the infinite, which is precisely the characteristic idea of person; above all, be sure that the legislation of that time will respect liberty, and protect it, and spread it abroad; and that it will be liberal and more or less democratic. Thus we see why, instead of raising an army equipped at its own expense, and consequently composed of the best families, of the rich and the Eupatrides, Pericles established a civic army; an army, into which every one rich or poor could enter; an army penetrated with the spirit of the times, and capable of defending it. We here see the explanation of the law by which Pericles gave a few oboli to all the freeborn citizens who should assist at the political assemblies. I do not say that, without its philosophic element, the age of Pericles would be incomprehensible; but it seems to me incontestable, that its clearest illustration proceeds directly from the abstractions of the Socratic philosophy.

If we look upon modern history from this point of view, we shall not find it less fertile, or less luminous. In the progress of civilization, the exterior elements of each age, the symbols of the

idea of each age, if I may use this language, generally disengage and illustrate themselves, and reveal continually more and more the spirit which animates them. Thus the idea of the Greek world is more transparent than that of the oriental world; and the idea of modern history, is more so than that of ancient history. With us, arts, laws, political events, and religious events, have all of them a more ideal and luminous character; yet, however luminous this character may be, if we would comprehend it still better, it will not be unwise to address ourselves to the philosophy of the times, which always assumes the office of furnishing its most precise and most general formula. It is easy to comprehend, at present, the interior idea concealed within the religious movements of the sixteenth century, and that of the political movements of the English revolution. Nevertheless, without insisting upon the point, I ask if we do not comprehend it much more clearly when we see it, at the close of that century, resolve itself into the Cartesian philosophy. This sixteenth century, with its most interior and hidden tendencies, aggrandized, and idealized, and developed to their last result, became a man, in the person of him, who in 1637 was heard to say, "There is no other authority than that of individual thought; existence itself has no other manifestation than thought; and so far as regards myself, I am, only

because I think. The authority of all possible truths exists for me, only on this ground — that in the free exercise of my thought, they are evident to *me*.” It is not the authority of Aristotle only, which is here rejected ; it is every other authority than that of thought. Thus, without my dwelling upon this point any longer, you will conceive what a new light, such a fact as this casts upon all contemporary facts.

I could take at pleasure, gentlemen, any particular number of ages, and propose to you, the external elements of each of them being given, to determine the philosophy which would be the result of each ; or rather, and with greater confidence, the philosophy of any epoch being given, to determine thence, in a general way, the character of the external elements of that epoch. I will confine myself to the 18th century. Take the philosophy of the 18th century, and see, if its philosophy being given, you do not deduce from it the whole age immediately and perfectly.

Suppose that in the midst of a century, a man should rise and say : There is no idea which does not enter the mind of man through his senses ; and suppose that this proposition be universally accepted, and that it constitute the philosophy of the century. Suppose, again, that by the side of this man, another should rise and add ; As there is nothing in thought which has not entered there

through the senses, and as all our ideas, when thoroughly analyzed, are reducible to sensations ; so among the motives which determine our actions, there is not one, which may not be referred to an interested motive — to selfishness. Suppose that this doctrine should appear to the age which heard it, so plain, so evident, so incontestable, that it met with no contradiction, and, without combat, became the established creed of all ranks and classes ; so that in the saloons of a capital, the immense success of this doctrine caused a man, who appeared to represent the whole intelligence of his epoch, to say, “The success of the work of Helvetius is not surprising ; he is a man who has told the secret of all the world.” No, surely this is *not* the secret of all the world ; it is not the secret of humanity, and of all the epochs of history ; but it is very true, that it *was* the secret of that epoch, and of almost all the world in the 18th century.

Now gentlemen, let me ask you ; this light being thrown upon the 18th century, is it not easy to understand the position of all things appertaining to it ; and may we not determine, before hand, the necessary character of all the other elements of that age ? What must be the government of an epoch like this ? Assuredly it can not be a free government founded upon the knowledge of, and the respect due to, the rights of humanity ; for how could the existence of these rights be respected,

how could they be reclaimed and vindicated ? The philosophy of sensation and of selfishness, must be the contemporary of a social order without dignity ; of an arbitrary and absolute government ; but of an absolute government falling to the ground from weakness and corruption. It would be absurd to suppose that religion should, at such a time, really influence the souls of men ; for every religion, whatever it may be, inculcates a doctrine totally different from that of the sovereignty of sense and of pleasure. Poetry and the arts would necessarily betray a character of littleness and meanness ; for the contrary would imply that the form of thought and feeling might be great, where thought and feeling themselves, were wholly destitute of greatness.

Examine thus every element of the 18th century, and you will find yourselves able to anticipate distinctly their character, by searching for the counter proof of the philosophy of that epoch. We may, I repeat, perform either of the two following operations ; we may, either from the exterior elements of an epoch, go to its philosophy ; or from its philosophy we may go to its other contemporary elements ; with this difference, that in beginning with philosophy, we place ourselves at the heart of the whole epoch ; but if we begin with any other element whatever, we rest upon some point of the circumference, and the total movement escapes us.

If these considerations are true, it follows, that as philosophy is the culminating point of human nature, so the history of philosophy is also the culminating point of history ; that this alone is indeed history ; that it is — I must call it so — the history of history.

The history of philosophy is to the other parts of the history of humanity, what the history of humanity is to that of external nature. In external nature, there exists also a certain principle of thought ; but this thought, which is ignorant of itself, which is concealed, and as it were buried in the inorganic world ; which begins to manifest itself in the vegetable world ; and which manifests itself more clearly in the animal world ; does not lay hold upon itself, does not say *me*, but in humanity ; I would say, in the consciousness of man : yes, gentlemen, there is also a history of the external world ; for this external world has its basis, its regular developement, and its progress. There is a scale of impersonal beings, through which thought ascends before it reaches a consciousness of itself ; it begins to know itself in humanity. Here it commences a new developement ; richer, and more regular than the former ; and through this it must also pass, before it can reach — not a simple consciousness — but an absolute knowledge of itself. That it may attain to this full and perfect knowledge of its own nature, and of the riches it

includes, it must undergo the same labor which before was necessary, ere it could pass from unorganized nature, to personal nature. The process of this labor, is the entire history of humanity, with all its elements ; the history of industry and of government ; of religion and of art ; and the last and the highest is the history of philosophy. It is there only, that humanity knows itself fully, in the whole richness of its developement, and with all its elements elevated to their highest power, and placed in the strongest and truest light. As the history of humanity, is the crown of the history of nature, so the history of philosophy crowns the history of humanity.

Therefore the history of philosophy always comes the last. Where political history, the history of art, and the history of religion, are feeble, the history of philosophy is feeble, or nothing. When other history grows great, that of philosophy is aggrandized in the same proportion. In India, for instance, we have seen that there is no history, by reason that there is no liberty ; that men, not regarding themselves or their actions as of much importance, do not seek to record or to explain them ; and that, the chief men being priests, and representing the gods, and being as gods, chronology is confounded with mythology, and history is never able to reach an independent existence. Now, where there is no history (or almost



none) of the other elements of civilization, do not expect a history of philosophy. In Greece, chronology and history begin with liberty. There, men being free, and respecting themselves, and regarding their actions as having a value, put them together and write them in chronicles, and by degrees, rise to history properly so called. Then, but only then, a history of philosophy is possible. It is thus, that the history of philosophy was born in Greece: but it remained there, necessarily, in a state of infancy. As political history alone shone in Greece, and as they had scarcely any history of art, or of religion, the history of philosophy participated in this general feebleness; it was scarcely more than a chronicle; at least, only under this form, has it reached our days. In the middle ages, nothing more than mere chronicles existed in any department of history. With modern civilization history truly begins; it comes forth from the chronicle, and reaches its genuine form. By degrees, it proceeds from politics to art, and from art to religion. During the last half century, great attempts have been made to cultivate the highest regions of the history of humanity. In the general progress of historical labors, the history of philosophy has come in its turn, and in its place. It belonged to Germany — that classical land of history in all its branches — to give to the history of philosophy a powerful impulse. It is in the

force of events, in the destinies of civilization, of history and of philosophy, that this movement should extend itself incessantly. Born but yesterday, a boundless futurity lies before the history of philosophy. It has come last; and for it has the highest place been reserved: its destinies are those of philosophy. Let us hope that France, which already with such brilliant success, begins political history; which has given a successor to Winkelman, and an interpreter to Creuzer; that France, which once produced a Descartes, will not be faithless to herself; and that, after having entered upon the philosophical career which she opened for other nations, she will, in her turn, enter upon that of the history of philosophy, and leave there the marks of her progress. I shall be happy, gentlemen, if my instruction may hasten this future, and draw upon philosophy and its history, the attention and interest of so many minds full of ardor and of strength.



## LECTURE IV.

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That the history of philosophy is at once special and general. Of the qualities of an historian of philosophy. Of the love of humanity. Of the historical method. Two methods. Empirical method ; that it is almost impracticable, and cannot explain facts. Of the speculative method. Coalescence of the two methods into one, which taking human reason with its elements and their relations and laws as a point of departure, seeks the developement thereof in history. The result of such a method would be the identity of the interior developement of reason with its historical developement, the identity of philosophy with the history of philosophy. Application of this method. Three points which it should embrace. 1st. The complete enumeration of the elements of reason. 2d. Their reduction. 3d. Their relations, and all their relations. Historical antecedents of this inquiry. Aristotle and Kant. Vices of their theory. 1st. Enumeration of the elements of reason. 2d. Reduction to two, unity and variety, identity and difference, substance and phenomenon, absolute cause and relative cause, the finite and the infinite, pure thought and determinate thought. 3d. Relations. Contemporariety of the two essential elements in the order of their acquisition. In essence, superiority and anteriority of one over the other. In time, the necessary coexistence of the two. Generation of one by the other. Recapitulation.

GENTLEMEN,—

**PHILOSOPHY** is to humanity, what humanity is to nature; in the same way, what the history of humanity is to the history of nature, that the history of philosophy is to the history of humanity. A

great idea, a divine idea, is also in the physical world, but it is there without knowing itself; it is only through the different kingdoms of nature and by a progressive labor, that it reaches a consciousness of itself in man. There it knows itself, at first imperfectly; and again, by degrees, and if we may so speak, from kingdom to kingdom, by the progressive labor of history, it attains not only to a consciousness, but to a full and complete comprehension of itself. This absolute and adequate comprehension of thought by itself, is the history of philosophy.

As a consequence of this, the history of philosophy is at once special and very general. It is special, for it retraces the developement of a special element of human nature, — of reason; considered thus, it has its own events, its peculiar laws, its proper movement, a world apart. But as the developement of reason presupposes the developement of all the other elements of human nature, the history of philosophy presupposes the developement of all the other branches of history, the history of industry, that of legislation, of art, and of religion. Its movement reflects all the movements which take place in anterior and secondary spheres; its laws envelope all other laws; finally, it is, as I have said in my last lecture, the history of history. It has been regarded, for a century, as an important conquest made by the

spirit of history that it has risen from the interest until then concentrated upon some individuals, and upon military or diplomatic events, to the superior interest of the morals, the laws, the arts, the religion, of any given people, country, or epoch; and this has been, in fact, a real progress of history. But what is one people, or country, or epoch, in the general movement of humanity, in which all people, all countries, all epochs, and all acts of legislation, all systems of art, all religions, concur? The idea of representing this total movement must needs be one of the last conquests of history; it dates from the last years of the last century. But this great movement itself is only the basis of the history of philosophy. I do not exaggerate. I do nothing more than draw the direct consequence of this principle, that reason governs all the applications of reason, explains all, and cannot be explained.

A genuine history of philosophy, at the same time that it should be special, should also be general, and connect itself with the entire history of humanity. Nothing that is human can be foreign to it; for nothing that is human escapes the history of humanity, and all the labor of the history of humanity passes into the history of philosophy. The entire history of civilization is the pedestal of the history of philosophy. The history of philosophy is therefore eminently human; it contains the history of religion, of art, of legislation, of

wealth ; and to a certain point, it contains physical geography itself. For if the history of philosophy refers to that of humanity, the history of humanity refers to that of nature which is the first basis and theatre of humanity, to the constitution of the globe, to its division, — in a word, to physical geography. Considered from this point of view, the history of philosophy assumes the highest interest ; but to reach this elevation, it must have traversed ages ; and the philosophy of which it is but the representative must have found itself able to lay hold upon the universal harmony of things, the harmony of nature and of humanity, and that of all parts of humanity among themselves under the dominion of reason.

Who, gentlemen, is able to realize this idea of the history of philosophy ? He must be one who combines knowledges the most diverse, and erudition of the greatest extent, with philosophical views of a high character ; one who is not ignorant of any of the facts which make up the immense history of humanity, and who controls all these facts by thought ; who, while able to follow them into their whole development, can also conceive their secret relations, their true order, and trace this order to its only source, in the comprehension of the constituent elements of humanity ; and who, from the bosom of this invisible world of consciousness, can, as it were, prophesy the events of the external world. He must be such an one as Leibnitz him-

self, that is to say, a man of the greatest intellect and the most extensive knowledge, and a Leibnitz at the summit of the consummating age of humanity.

I turn my eyes from this ideal conception of the historian of philosophy ; I dare contemplate only one of the qualities necessary to him ; but upon this one I can look freely, for it is not a quality of the understanding, but a moral quality, almost a virtue, which one cannot recollect too often, if it be only that we may not lose sight of it either in science or in life : I speak of the love of humanity. The true love of humanity must attach us to every thing which belongs to man. If you love human nature, you must take it as it is, and regard it under all its aspects. Now, it is all entire within each one of you. Reenter into your own consciousness ; lay hold upon every part of the whole man, omit not any ; take, equally, the idea of the useful, of the just, of the beautiful, of the holy, of the true, of the true in itself ; it is thus that you will exert yourself to comprehend all the parts of humanity ; for if there be one single element which lies upon you as a burthen, and against which you feel a repugnance, you will transport these prejudices into history. As you will have mutilated humanity in yourself, so will you mutilate it in history ; you will yield to fanatical prejudices of one kind or of another ; you will perceive in history, industry alone, or only art, or religion, or



legislation, or philosophy. Do not separate them ; accept them all together, for they all are man. Study humanity as a whole, first in yourself and in your consciousness, then in that consciousness of the human race which is called history. *Homo sum et nihil humani a me alienum puto.* Let this be our common device. For myself, I will endeavor to be faithful to this history of philosophy, which, according to my principles, ought to be but a recapitulation of the history of humanity.

The history of philosophy which I shall present to you, then, will be very general and very special. I shall exclude nothing, but I shall direct every thing towards the particular object of the history of philosophy. I shall commence with the theatre of history or physical geography ; I shall then bring before you the principal events which constitute ordinary history ; I shall recall to you the great political institutions, the different forms of government which have passed over human societies, the religions which have civilized the world, the arts which have embellished it ; and after having run through all these degrees of the human development, I shall attempt the last and the highest of all, philosophy. You understand, that being pressed for time, I must, without forgetting any of these steps, take them rapidly, contenting myself with marking the direction of my progress, and traversing, with more or less speed, the different spheres which

are anterior to that of philosophy, to rest finally upon that, and to gather from it carefully the lights, which are to illuminate all the rest, and to serve as a torch for the whole of history.

But before we begin our journey, we must examine a question of the highest importance, that of the method which may conduct us with most certainty to the object we propose, and put us in possession of a genuine history of humanity and of philosophy. This question necessarily presents itself at the commencement of our career; and in a course particularly devoted to method, it is strictly our duty to meet it and endeavor to find an answer.

There are two historical methods, and there can be but two. That which presents itself to the mind first and most naturally is the experimental method. It seems that history being but a collection of facts, and the history of philosophy being itself only a collection of facts of a particular sort which are called systems, we need only apply to these facts the same method which we apply to all others, that is, experimental analysis. We should begin with stating and describing them; and, when they are stated and described, we should look for their relations, and from these relations derive their laws, and from these laws determine the entire order and developement of the history of philosophy. We should take, for instance, a certain number of epochs, of schools, of celebrated systems, and study

these epochs, these schools, these systems, in succession ; and an assiduous observation would thus gradually discover the relations which separate and those which unite them, and the laws of their general formation. Nothing can appear more simple, or more easy, or more wise, than such a progress : nevertheless, I ask empiricism to pardon me, but, this process seems to me almost impracticable and incapable of leading to any great result.

If you suppose that the only legitimate historical method is the experimental method, be faithful to this supposition ; that is to say, confine yourself rigorously to this method of experiment, never leave it, never permit another method to govern you while unconscious of its influence, and to guide you even while you believe and assert that you have no other guide than experience. The following are the conditions which are imposed upon you by the exclusive employment of the experimental method. In the first place, for an experimental method which supposes no result anterior to observation, there are no epochs of philosophy. What, in fact, is an epoch of philosophy ? It is a certain number of systems and of schools gathered under one general point of view, which, to the historian, appears to command them all, and to constitute of them a single unity. You readily conceive that such cannot be the point of departure for the method of experiment, because this would imply that empiricism begins history

with bringing into it distinctions which empiricism has not yet made, classifications which do not necessarily belong to it, and which would be, in its regard, pure hypothesis. Thus far, the experimental method cannot suppose the division of history, into that of the East, and Greece and Rome, and the middle age, and modern times, to be given; nor can it admit of any other classification, to which experience perhaps might lead, but with which it cannot begin; for otherwise this method would beg the question; it would suppose that it was proceeding a posteriori, when, in fact, it was proceeding a priori; it would do what it refused to do, and not know what it was doing. Instead of classifications and historical divisions already made, instead of conventional epochs, it can only have before it, at its beginning, three or four thousand years filled with some thousands of schools and of systems, amongst which it must throw itself at random, and guide itself there as it best can.

The experimental method not only has at its commencement no epochs, but it can also have no schools. What is a school? It is a certain number of systems more or less connected by time, but especially connected by intimate relations, and still more so by a certain similarity of principles and of views. This is certainly a classification less vast than that of an epoch, but it is still a classification, that is to say, a result to which we can

arrive legitimately only at the close of a long examination, and which we do not meet at the first step of the experimental method. Hence, in regard to this method, at the commencement of its application, schools no more exist than epochs. And let not empiricism say, that if it tread under foot the prejudice of conventional epochs and schools, it will assume at once, upon the general faith of mankind, the great systems which have made so much noise in the world, and will establish itself firmly upon this solid foundation. This again is but a prejudice. The authority of the human race is undoubtedly great; but when we profess to be guided only by experience, we must speak no more of this authority than of any other. In rigorous exactness, empiricism has no right to pronounce in favor of any one system compared to any other, until it has thoroughly examined both the one and the other. It has no right to pass lightly over certain systems, that of Posidonius the stoic for instance, while it bestows a close attention to Zeno; for who has decided that the one does not deserve the same attention as the other? Such a course would suppose that mankind is a just distributor of glory, which supposition is itself but an hypothesis. Thus empiricism must not only study celebrated philosophers, but all philosophers; it must seek out their scattered fragments and labor painfully in their reconstruction. Let us now consider the position of

empiricism in the presence of four or five thousand years, filled, not with epochs, nor with schools, nor with systems, but only with individuals. Open the catalogue of pythagoricians prepared by the learned Fabricius and you will find a pretty large number of them ; nevertheless there are many omitted whom we are every day discovering. As much may be said of the platonists, the stoics, the peripatetics, the alexandrians. And yet all this must be studied in detail, under penalty of being found faithless to the method of experiment. Now, as in following out rigorously this method, a destiny of many ages would be needed before we could reach any general results of value, and as no one can calculate upon such a destiny, we must address ourselves to some other method.

Let us go further. Let us suppose, that after having interrogated all these isolated systems, we have reached, by the way of observation only, a certain reconstruction of the different schools, and thence a certain reconstruction of fundamental epochs ; and that this experimental method has found itself in possession of all the facts of the history of philosophy, distinguished and classified ; and now where is it ? It is in possession of a chronological history : it knows that the East is not Greece, that the East has preceded the Greek and Roman world, and that this latter preceded the middle ages, which again preceded our epoch. This is a

fact; and the experimental method has not the right of going beyond facts, and the real characters of facts. But is this fact sufficient? It is enough, after having studied the history of mankind, to know that one epoch has gone before and that another has followed? Does this result satisfy all the demands of thought? Can this result be any thing more to reason than a point of departure? Does reason consent to know no more of that which was, than that it was; and of that which is, than that it is? Does it not wish to know why that which preceded or followed, did precede or follow? Does it not wish to know all this rationally and in an order which may be that of reason? Will it not give itself some account of these facts, and seek to comprehend them in their causes, and to refer them to their ultimate laws, that is, to something necessary? To this the constant reply is, that from the facts themselves we draw the necessity of the facts. Be it so; but let any one endeavor to effect this metamorphosis of fact into right, of contingent into necessary, of relative into absolute. When this metamorphosis shall be legitimately effected, I will believe that if this experimental method be impracticable, as I have proved, 'tis a pity that it is so, for it might at length have satisfied all the wants of humanity. But dialectics demonstrate that this metamorphosis is impossible. We see that which is, we observe

it, we experiment upon it ; but that which should be, the reason of phenomena, their necessity, we see not ; we do not touch, nor grasp, nor observe them, and we are here in a world which does not fall under the experimental method. It remains then that we address ourselves to some other method. Let us try.

What is the business of history ? What is the stuff of which it is made ? Who is the personage of history ? Man : evidently man and human nature. There are many different elements in history. What are they ? Evidently again, the elements of human nature. History is therefore the developement of humanity, and of humanity only ; for nothing else but humanity develops itself, for nothing else than humanity is free. Now what is the first difficulty under which the experimental method fails ? It is the infinite number of the possible elements of history, amongst which this method must necessarily entangle and confuse itself. But if there can be in history no other elements than those of humanity, and if we can possess ourselves of all the elements of humanity by anticipation, before we enter into history, we shall have gained much ; for in beginning history, we shall know that it can have neither more nor less than certain elements, although these may clothe themselves in different forms. Assuredly we shall have made great progress towards the attainment



of our object, when we shall know beforehand all the pieces which compose the machine whose play and operation we would study.

Moreover, when we have all the elements, I mean all the essential elements, their mutual relations do, as it were, discover themselves. We draw from the nature of these different elements, if not all their possible relations, at least their general and fundamental relations. Now what are the general and fundamental relations of things? Montesquieu has said, and it has been often repeated, these are the laws of things. *Laws are the necessary relations which are derived from the nature of things.* He who raised the loftiest monument and the only solid monument of the last age, carefully guarded against addressing himself exclusively to experience; he addressed himself at once to the nature of things; and the essential elements being thence determined, he seized their relations; these fundamental relations he erected into laws; and these laws, when once established, he applied to experience and carried them into history. In fact, unless the nature of things abdicate its sovereignty in the process of its own development, we must necessarily find in history these elements with their fundamental relations, that is, with their laws; thence resulted the "Esprit des Lois."

I am aware of the inconveniences of this second method; I know that it is possible to believe we

have laid hold upon the essential elements of human nature, when we have only grasped a system too broad or too narrow, and certainly false on one side or another; and that then, to impose this false system upon history, is to falsify history by a system. I know, and I hasten to declare, that if there be no other possible and rational method than that of which I have just given an exposition, we must be upon our guard against its seductions and inconveniences, by submitting it to the rude and laborious trial of the former method; and it is to this that I would come.

The experimental method, alone, is scarcely practicable, and can conduct us only to the knowledge of what has actually occurred, without enabling us to know why it occurred, or occurred thus or there, and not *otherwise or elsewhere*. On the other hand, the speculative system may lead us into a false system, which will again lead to a false view of history. But unite these two methods, act like a good physical philosopher, who in his laboratory, *thinks and experiments, experiments and thinks*, and makes use at once of his senses and of his reason. Begin with the method *a priori*, and give to it by way of counterpoise the method *a posteriori*. I consider the identity of these two methods as the only torch by whose light we may find our way in the labyrinth of history. We must begin with seeking the essential elements of humanity,

and proceed by deriving from the nature of these elements their fundamental relations, and from these the laws of their developement; and finally, we must go to history and ask if it confirms or rejects our results.

If it confirms them, if experience reproduces the speculations of thought, it will follow in the first place, that we have entered upon a path which leads somewhere, which would have been impossible, had we pursued the experimental method alone; and, in the second place, we should no longer have systems, schools, and epochs merely, so to speak, in juxtaposition in space, and succession in time, — a simple chronology; but that we should have a chronology in a frame superior to its own. History would be no longer a series of incoherent words, succeeding each other in a certain order we know not why; it would become an intelligible phrase in which all the words, presenting some idea, would form together one whole, which itself would completely express some definite meaning. It would not be an abstract system *a priori*, nor a simple chronology *a posteriori*; it would be a realized system, an alliance between the ideal and the real; in a word, it would be something reasonable. Indeed, to say that human nature has an irrational developement, would be to say that it is not regular and subject to laws. But how can the development of reason fail to be in regular conformity

with its nature and with its laws ? Now human reason is the element of philosophy. The different elements of human reason with their relations and their laws, are philosophy. If therefore all this, in falling into a historical form, developes itself rationally, it follows, that we shall begin with philosophy, and end with it ; and that we shall thus arrive at the identity of philosophy and the history of philosophy. The history of human reason, or the history of philosophy will be something reasonable and philosophical. It will be philosophy itself, with all its elements, with all their relations, with all their laws ; that is to say, philosophy in its interior developement represented, on a great scale and in brilliant characters, by the hands of time and history, in the visible progress of the human race.

It seems to me that such a result is worth seeking ; it is no dream ; it is the fruit of the very nature of things. It is in itself necessary that human reason should develope itself reasonably, and consequently that it form, in its developement, something regular, harmonious, systematic, and philosophical. It is in itself necessary that all this, given to time and passed into history, should still subsist, and appear continually more clearly, and upon a scale continually greater. The identity of philosophy and its history is certain ; we have only to unveil and illustrate it.

To be faithful to the method which I have stated, we must begin with seeking what are the elements of human reason.

What are the elements of human reason, that is to say, what are the fundamental ideas which preside over its developement? This is the vital question of philosophy. Reason is developed a long time before it inquires into the manner of its developement; and in philosophy, as in every thing, practice precedes theory. Just as we admire before we ask why we admire, as we do disinterested acts before we analyze disinterestedness, we apply our reason before we inquire into its nature, recognise its laws, and measure its reach. Philosophy or reflection commenced when, instead of leaving reason to develope itself by its own virtue according to its laws and the free scope of those laws, it was called upon to explain itself, its nature, and its laws; when its rights were discussed, and their evidences demanded. Philosophy *then* began; and since that time this inquiry has always been the chief object with all philosophers who have left their traces upon the history of philosophy.

This inquiry, that it may be methodically directed, must be divided into three points. We must begin with stating and enumerating all the elements or essential ideas of reason; we must have them all, and be very sure that we neither suppose any nor omit any; for if we imagine one

only, a single element which is purely hypothetical will lead us to hypothetical relations, and thence to an hypothetical system. The first law of a wise method is, therefore, a complete enumeration. The second is an examination of these elements so profound that it shall result in the last reduction of these elements, and leave us the determinate number of those elements which are simple, indivisible one by the other, indecomposable and primitive, and which constitute the impassable boundary of analysis. The third law of this method is the examination of the different relations of these elements to each other. I say the different relations; for these elements may sustain a great number of different relations. We must suppose none, but neither must we neglect any. We shall possess the foundations of reason and of history, only when we have all these elements, when we have reduced them ultimately, and have seized all their relations.

The inquiry which we are about to commence has already occupied and almost filled a course of instruction, which, though doubtless forgotten, may be considered as my apology for the results which I am compelled briefly to recall to your recollection. I have to say that, during the first six years of my professorship, I pursued in one way or another, and under one form or another, but one object—the analysis of the fundamental

elements of human reason in the different spheres in which it manifests itself, in treating of beauty, of morals, of rights, and of every other branch of philosophy. This question has always been before my eyes; and the way in which I resolved it formed the peculiar character of my earliest instruction. I trust you will believe that I have no inclination to offer you truths resting only on my own assertion. But it is not my fault that events, which I could not control, oblige me now to run over the entire history of humanity and of philosophy in a few lectures. Yet I hope you will also believe that I do not now speak unpreparedly, and that my words are the result of long and painful researches. It is now more than twelve years since, for the first time in a public chair, I gave a complete enumeration of the elements of human reason, a reduction of those elements, and an analysis of their relations. Now, I shall content myself with stating the results of those labors, leaving to your meditations the work of fecundating these germs, and trusting that, in developing them, history will confirm them.

The rigorous and scientific analysis of the elements of human reason has been twice seriously attempted. It belonged to one of those men of the highest genius, who have done honor to humanity, who, after having searched into the elements of every other part of human nature, have established

upon some definite method, a new science, the recent progress of which has only added to the glory of its founder—it belonged to Aristotle, to penetrate into the depths of human reason, to submit it to the same scalpel which had produced the history of animals, to determine and to describe all its elements. It is now about fifty years since this laborious enterprise was renewed by Kant, a man who, by his love of method, by the penetration and reach of his mind, his love of reality and his clear perception of its truth in all things, reminds us, most, of Aristotle. Aristotle had attempted an enumeration of the elements of human reason under the denomination, so celebrated and so decried, of categories. Kant used nearly the same technical language. It is of little consequence whether we call the ideas which preside over the developement of human reason categories, in a Greek idiom, or principles of human nature, in English, or designate them by some other correspondent expression in German. All these disputes upon words should be sent back to scholasticism. We are not now busied about words, but facts. It is my opinion, that since Aristotle and Kant, the list of the elements of reason should be closed; and that these two great analyzers have exhausted the statistics of reason. But I am far from thinking that the reduction of these elements which they have made is the last boundary of analysis; nor that they have discerned



the fundamental relations of these elements. What are the elements found by Aristotle and by Kant ? At what reduction of them can we stop ? What are the essential relations of these elements ? These are important questions ; I can however give to them but a few moments.

If I proceeded analytically, I should enumerate to you one after another all the elements of reason ; I should demonstrate their reality by addressing your consciousness ; and if they stood in your consciousness as clearly as in mine, I should, after having enumerated, determined, and described all these elements, proceed to their reduction and to the examination of their relations. But I must advance more rapidly. I must tell you at once that human reason, whatever be the mode of its developement, however it begin, whatever it consider, whether it stop at the observation of that nature which lies around us, or plunge into the depths of the interior world, conceives all things only under the dominion of two ideas. Does it examine numbers and quantity ? It can see there nothing but unity and multiplicity. These are the two ideas in which every consideration, relative to number, ends. One and the diverse, one and the multiple, unity and plurality, these are the elementary ideas of reason in regard to number. Is it occupied about space ? It can only consider it under two points of view ; it conceives either a

determinate and limited space, or the space of spaces, absolute space. Is it occupied with existence ? Does it apprehend all things under the sole relation of existence ? It can only conceive the idea of absolute existence, or the idea of relative existence. Does it think of time ? It conceives either of determinate time, time properly so called, or of time in itself, — absolute time, that is to say, eternity ; as absolute space is immensity. Does it think of forms ? It conceives of form as finite, determinate, limited, measurable, and of something which is the principle of that form, and which is neither measurable, nor limited, nor finite ; in one word, of the infinite. Thinks it of movement, of action ? It can only conceive either of limited and bounded actions and principles of action, of bounded, relative, secondary forces and causes, or of an absolute force, a first cause beyond whose action it is neither possible to seek nor to find any thing. Thinks it of all the exterior or interior phenomena which develop themselves before it in this moving scene of events and accidents ? There again, it can only conceive of two things, of manifestation and appearance — as appearance and simple manifestation, or of that, which, even while it appears, retains something still which does not fall into appearance, that is to say, being in itself ; or, to use the language of science, of phenomenon and substance. In thought, it conceives of thoughts

which are relative, either to something that may exist or may not exist, or to that which is itself the principle of thought — a principle which passes into relative thought, but does not exhaust itself there. Does it perceive any thing beautiful or good in the moral world ? It transfers to it, irresistibly, this same character of the finite and the infinite, which becomes here the imperfect and the perfect, the ideal of beauty and the ideal of reality, virtue with the wretchedness of actual reality, or the holy in its elevation and in its unstained purity.

I cannot enlarge upon this topic, for the necessity of rapidity in my synthesis compels me to avoid analysis. In my view, here are all the elements of human reason. The external world, the intellectual world, the moral world, are all subjected to these two ideas. Reason neither does nor can develop itself but under these two conditions. The grand division of ideas which is at present acknowledged, is a division into contingent ideas and necessary ideas. This division is but a reflection, under a more limited aspect, of that at which I rest ; and you may represent it to yourselves under the formula of unity and multiplicity, of substance and phenomenon, of absolute cause and relative causes, of the perfect and the imperfect, of the finite and the infinite.

Each of these propositions has two terms ; one

of them necessary, absolute; *one*, substantial, causal, perfect, infinite; the other, imperfect, phenomenal, relative, multiple, finite. A correct analysis identifies all these first terms together, and all these second terms together. It identifies immensity, eternity, absolute substance and absolute cause, perfection and unity, on the one hand; and on the other, the multiple, the phenomenal, the relative, the limited, the finite, the bounded, the imperfect.

Thus, all the propositions we have enumerated are reduced to one proposition only, and to one as vast, as reason and possibility; that is, to the opposition between unity and plurality, substance and phenomenon, being and appearance, identity and difference, and the like.

Having arrived at this reduction, let us examine the relation of these two terms; let us take, for instance, as a proposition which may serve as an example, unity and multiplicity. What are the relations of these two terms? In what order do we conceive, in what order do we acquire them? Do we begin with conceiving and acquiring the idea of unity, then the idea of diversity; or do we in the first place conceive the idea of diversity, and afterwards that of unity? Recollect for a moment, enter into your own consciousness, and tell me whether it is possible for you not to conceive the idea of unity, as soon as I speak to you of the idea

of multiplicity ? or if, when I speak to you of the infinite, you do not necessarily conceive the finite. We ought not to say, as is said by two great rival schools, that the human understanding begins either with unity and the infinite, or with the finite and the contingent and the multiple. For, if it begin with unity alone, I defy it ever to reach multiplicity ; or, if it depart from multiplicity alone, I equally defy it to arrive at unity ; if it depart from the phenomenon alone, and adhere closely to it alone, it will never arrive at the first cause, at substance ; if it depart from the idea of imperfection alone, it will never arrive at perfection ; if it consider vice and evil only by themselves, it will never find virtue and good ; and reciprocally. The two fundamental ideas to which reason is reduced, are two ideas contemporaneous in reason ; two, which reason cannot be without, and which moreover arrive at the same time. In the order of the acquisition of our knowledge, the one supposes the other. As we do not begin with the senses and experience alone, and as we do not, any more, begin with abstract thought and intelligence alone ; and as we must unite these two points of departure into one ; so the human mind begins neither with idealism nor with realism ; neither with unity nor multiplicity ; it begins, and cannot but begin — with one and the other : the one is the *opposite* of the other ; it is — a contrary implying its contrary ;

one is, only on the condition that the other is at the same time. This is their relation in the order of the acquisition of our knowledges. But it is the relation of these two ideas *in the mind*, and not the relation of these ideas *in themselves*.

One is not conceivable by us without the other ; but, while we cannot conceive the one without the other, we cannot any more conceive that, in the intrinsic order of things — in order in itself — variety can exist, unless unity have previously existed. Unity, perfection, substance, eternity, absolute space, appear to us as the affirmation, the positive, the superior, and anterior idea ; of which, diversity the finite, the imperfect, the momentaneous, the successive, are but the negation. It is then unity which preexists before variety, as affirmation before negation, as, in the other categories, being precedes appearance, the first cause precedes the secondary cause, the principle of all manifestation precedes all manifestation.

Unity is anterior to variety ; but although one be anterior to the other, yet, when they are in being, how can they be isolated ? What is unity considered in a state of isolation ? It is an indivisible unity, a dead unity, a unity, remaining in the depths of its absolute existence, and never developing itself into multiplicity, variety and plurality ; it is, for itself, as if it were not. In the same way, what is variety without unity ? It is a variety

which admits not of unity, which, therefore, cannot be referred to any unity, nor ever be elevated into a totality, nor into any collection whatever ; nor can it ever be added together, or make up a sum ; it is a series of undefined quantities, none of which can be said to be such a quantity, and not another ; for this would be to suppose that it is one ; that is, to suppose the idea of unity ; so that without unity, variety also is as if it were not. Thus we see what either variety or unity, if isolated, would produce. One is necessary to the being of the other, necessary to its existence ; — an existence which is neither — a multifarious, varied, motive, fugitive, and negative existence, nor — that absolute, eternal, infinite, and perfect existence, which is perceived, only, as the negation of actual existence. All perceptible existence, all reality, consists in the union of these two elements ; although, in its essence, one is superior and anterior to the other. They must coexist, that, from their existence, there may result reality. Variety, without unity, wants reality ; and unity, without variety, wants reality. Reality, or life (I speak here of reasonable life, of the life of reason) is the simultaneity of these two elements.

But there is yet another relation than that of their coexistence. And let me say here, that I do not willingly detain you thus upon this point, but am constrained to do so by the argument.

You cannot separate variety from unity, nor

unity from variety; neither substance from phenomenon, nor phenomenon from substance; one is anterior to the other, but does not exist without the other; they coexist necessarily. But how do they coexist? What is the mystery of this coexistence? Unity is anterior to multiplicity; how then can unity admit multiplicity? Human thought is unable to admit one without the other; but, in real order, we have seen that one is anterior to the other; how then is this movement from unity to variety made? Here is the fundamental vice of ancient and modern theories; here is the vice of the theory of Kant. It places unity on one side, and multiplicity on the other; and establishes such an opposition between them, that all passage from one to the other seems impossible. A higher analysis resolves this contradiction.

We have identified all the second terms together, and all the first terms together. And what are these first terms? They are immensity, eternity, infinity, unity. We shall hereafter see how the school of Elis, placing itself on this point of view exclusively, at the summit of immensity, eternity, being in itself, and infinite substance, defied other schools to depart thence and ever reach relative being, the finite, and multiplicity; and mocked at those who admitted the existence of the world, which is only, after all, a great multiplicity. The fundamental error of the school of Elis comes from this source, namely, that in all the first terms which



we have enumerated, it forgot one which equals all the rest in certainty, and is entitled to the same authority as all the rest ; and that is, the idea of cause. Immensity, or the unity of space ; eternity or the unity of time ; the unity of numbers, the unity of perfection, the ideal of beauty, infinity, substance, being in itself ; the absolute, — each is also a cause ; not a relative, contingent, and finite cause, but an absolute cause. Now, unity or substance, being an absolute cause, cannot but pass into act, cannot but develope itself. If being, in itself, or absolute substance, be given alone, without causality ; the world is impossible. But if being in itself is an absolute cause, creation is not only possible, it is necessary, and the world cannot but be. Take away the category of causality from the other categories, the superficial observer discovers no omission of any importance ; but you may now perceive its consequences. It destroys every possible conception of the creation of the world ; for it then would imply, that unity alone passes into variety, and substance into phenomenon. But the absolute is not the *absolutum quid* of the scholastics ; it is the absolute cause which absolutely creates, absolutely manifests itself, and which, in developing itself, submits to the condition of all developement, enters into variety, into the finite, into the imperfect, and produces all that we see around us.

We have enumerated, determined, described, or

rather cited, all the elements of human reason. We have reduced them to two. We have found that, in the order of the acquisition of our knowledges, one supposes the other, one is inseparable from the other. At the same time we have found that one is anterior and superior to the other in essence. But although one is superior and anterior to the other, we have found, that when once they have come into existence, one, without the other, is without reality ; and that both are necessary to constitute the real life of reason. Finally, we have found that one is the product of the other ; and that, one being given, there is not only a possibility, but a necessity of the other. This last relation is the most essential relation of these two elements. Unity, in itself, as absolute cause, contains the power of becoming variety and difference ; it contains the power ; but, until it be manifested, it is but a sterile unity ; but as soon as this power is put forth, it is no longer the primitive unity, it is a unity rich with its own fruits, and in it, multiplicity, variety, and life meet together. It is just so with the principle of thought ; not developed and in the state of pure substance, it is an intellectual principle without the element of difference, and consequently without any thoughts ; but when developed, it is a true intelligence, rich with all the thoughts which lie within its powers, and attaining to a knowledge of itself, and of its fecundity, by the consciousness of its products.

Apparently, I have only tormented you with abstractions. I have done what my masters have done before me. I hope to prove presently that these supposed abstractions are the foundations of all life. They are first, this unity enveloped in itself, pregnant, if we may so speak, with difference and multiplicity, but, without having yet produced them; then, variety, multiplicity, the finite, relative action, developed and in possession of the world, but as yet detached from unity; and finally, this new unity which has again united in its grasp the elements escaped from its bosom, and which now knows itself, at once as variety and unity, both together. These categories, so abstract and so empty in appearance, are the life of our nature; they constitute our own consciousness, they are the life of humanity, the life of history. This will be the subject of the next lecture.

## LECTURE V.

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### CONTENTS.

**Recapitulation.** Three ideas, as laws of reason. Absolute independence of ideas. Ideas, as the divine intelligence itself. Of the true character of intelligence. Reply to some objections. The passing of God into the universe. Of creation. Of the universe as the manifestation of the divine intelligence and of the ideas which constitute it. That these ideas pass into the world and produce harmony, beauty, and goodness. Expansion and attraction, &c. &c. Humanity. Man, a microcosm. Psychology, universal science abridged. Psychological facts, or the fundamental facts of consciousness; three terms, again; the finite, the infinite, and their relation. All men possess those facts; the only difference possible is the greater or less clearness which time gives to them, and the predominance of one or the other element as more or less attention is paid to it. That it is so with the human race. Its identity is the identity of three elements in the consciousness of the human race. Differences between individuals come from the predominance of one of them over the others. These differences constitute the different epochs of history.

GENTLEMEN—

LET us recall the conclusions of the last lecture. Reason, in whatever direction it developes itself, and to whatever it apply itself, and whatever it consider, can conceive nothing but under the condition of two ideas, which preside over the exercise of its activity; to wit; the idea of the one and of

multiple, of the finite and of the infinite, of being and of appearing, of substance and of phenomenon, of absolute cause and of second causes, of the absolute and the relative, of the necessary and the contingent, of immensity and of space, of eternity and of time, and the like. By bringing all these propositions together, by bringing together their first terms, a profound analysis identifies them; it identifies equally all the second terms; so that from all these propositions combined and compared, there results one only proposition, one single formula which is the very formula of thought, and which you may express, according to the case, by the one and the multiple, time and eternity, space and immensity, unity and variety, substance and phenomenon, &c. &c. Finally, the two terms of this comprehensive formula do not constitute a dualism in which the first term is on one side and the second on the other, without any other relation between them than that of being simultaneously perceived by reason; the relation which connects them is, by far, more essential. Unity, substance, being, immensity, eternity, &c., the first term of the formula, is at once cause, and absolute cause; and as it is absolute cause, it cannot but develop itself in the second term, that is to say, in multiplicity, in the phenomenon, in space and time, &c. The result of all this is, that these two terms, with the relation of generation which draws

the second from the first, and consequently refers the second constantly to the first, are the three integral elements of reason. Reason has not the power, in her boldest abstractions, to separate any one of these elements from any other of them. Try, for instance, to take away unity, and variety, by itself, is no longer susceptible of addition; no longer comprehensible; on the other hand, endeavor to take away variety, and you have an immovable unity, a unity which does not manifest itself, which is not, by itself, even a thought; for every thought may be represented by a proposition, and one single term is not enough for a proposition. Finally, take away the relation which intimately binds variety to unity, and you destroy that connexion between the two terms which a proposition requires. We may then regard it as incontestable, that these three terms are not only distinct, but inseparable; and that they constitute, at once and necessarily, a triplicity and an unity. Having reached this height we are as it were out of the sight of land, and it becomes particularly necessary to ascertain accurately where we are, to know the nature of these three ideas, which, in their triplicity and their unity, have appeared to us the very source of reason.

What is the nature of ideas? Are they simple signs which exist only in a dictionary, mere words, and must we become nominalists? By no means; for names, words, the signs by the aid of which

we think, can be admitted by us only on condition of our comprehending them; and we can comprehend them only on the general condition of all comprehension — that of hearing and understanding ourselves, that is to say, precisely on condition of these three ideas which govern and direct every operation of thought. Signs undoubtedly give great help to thought, but they are not its internal principle. It is too clear to be denied, that thought exists before its expression; that we do not think because we speak, but speak because we think and because we have something to say. But if we reject nominalism, must we become realists? Must we admit that ideas are things which exist like all other things, and that, as Malebranche says, they are little beings, by no means to be despised? By no means, gentlemen. Ideas are not things like other things. Who has seen ideas? Who has touched them? Who has placed himself in relation with them? If, as I strongly suspect, realists have intended to speak of the external existence of ideas, they have fallen into the most evident absurdity. I am disposed not to impute it to them; but whether justly or unjustly, they at all events are charged with it. To escape from this absurdity, shall we address ourselves to the conceptualists, and thus go through the known circle of the three great French schools of the middle age, in regard to the question of ideas? It is here that the in-

vestigation generally terminates. Now I am ready to admit, that ideas are only the conceptions of reason, of the understanding, of thought; provided you will agree with me as to the nature of reason, of the understanding, and of thought. Reflect well upon this; is reason, rigorously speaking, human, or is it only human inasmuch as it makes its appearance in man? Does reason belong to you? Is it yours? What is it which belongs to you and is yours in you? It is the will and its acts. I wish to move my arm and I move it. I form a certain resolution, it is exclusively my own; I cannot impute it to any of you; it belongs to me, it is my property. This is self-evident; for if it pleases me to do so, I may the very next instant form a contrary resolution, and may will some other thing, and I may produce another movement. The very essence of my will is to be free, to act or not to act, to commence an action or to suspend it, or to change it, when and as I choose. Is it so with the perceptions of reason? Reason conceives a mathematical truth; can it change this conception, as my will has changed at once my resolution? Can it conceive that two and two are not four? If you try, you cannot succeed in doing so; and the same phenomenon occurs, not only in mathematics, but in all the other spheres of reason. In morals, we should endeavor in vain to conceive that justice imposes no obligation; nor is it possible for us



when we think of the fine arts, not to regard certain forms as beautiful ; for reason always imposes upon us the same apperception. Reason does not modify itself to suit our pleasure ; we do not think as we wish to think ; our understanding is not free. That is, we do not make the laws of our reason, nor is reason our personal property. Whatever is free is ours ; what is not free in us, is not our own ; and liberty alone is personality. We cannot but smile when we hear reason spoken of, as if it were *individual*. Such declamation is evidently entirely thrown away ; for nothing is less individual than reason. If it were individual, it would be personal, it would be voluntary and free ; and we should control it, as we control our resolutions and the acts of our volition ; we should be able, at any moment, to change its acts, that is to say, its conceptions. If these conceptions were only individual, we should never think of imposing them upon any other individual ; for, to impose our personal and individual conceptions upon another individual, another person, would be the most outrageous and extravagant despotism. What is purely individual in me, has validity only within the sphere of my own individuality. But we do not confine ourselves to this ; if men admit not the truth of the mathematical relations of numbers to each other, if they acknowledge no difference between the beautiful and its opposite, between the

just and the unjust, we declare them to be insane or in a state of delirium. Why? Because we know that it is not the will of any individual which constitutes these conceptions; or in other words, we know that reason in itself, is not individual, but universal and absolute; that, because it is so, it governs all individuals by compulsion, and when one individual perceives himself compelled to submit to it, he knows that all other individuals are equally compelled to submit to it on the same ground. Therefore, reason is not a property of individuals; therefore it is not our own, it does not belong to us, it is not human; for, once more, that which constitutes man, his intrinsic personality, is his voluntary and free activity; all which is not voluntary and free, is added to man, but is not an integrant part of man. If this be admitted, I will grant that ideas are the conceptions of that universal and absolute reason which we do not cause to exist, but which makes its appearance in us, and which is a law to all individuals — of that reason which Fenelon found always at the end of his researches, and from which he in vain endeavored to abstract his thought, without ever being able to separate it from himself; and which, unceasingly returning into all his thoughts, whether high or low, drew from him the sublime conjecture, “O Reason, Reason, art not thou He whom I seek?” In this view of the subject, there is no difficulty;

and ideas will no longer be perceived as conceptions of human reason, but of reason in itself. It is however to be kept in mind, that reason, which in itself, is universal and absolute, and consequently infallible, having entered into human perceptions, and thereby connected with perceptions of the senses, the passions and the imagination, is no longer infallible. But it is not reason which deceives itself; it is that in which it exists, which misleads it; hence are all its aberrations. These are numerous, and as they are evidently derived from a relation, which in the actual state of things is our unavoidable condition, they are inevitable. Truth may be perceived by reason in its human state, if I may so express myself; yet, not always correctly; but even then, truth itself is neither altered nor destroyed; for it subsists independently of that human reason which either does not perceive it at all, or perceives it incorrectly. Truth in itself is as independent of reason in its present state, as reason in itself, is independent of man in whom it appears. And having thus separated it from the fallible reason of man, nothing remains but to refer it to reason not yet fallen into humanity, to universal, absolute, and infallible reason; to eternal reason, which is without space or time, or any contact with any thing relative, or contingent, or erroneous; to that intelligence of which our own, or rather that which appears in us, is but a

fragment, to that pure and incorruptible thought, which our thought reflects. This is the theory of Plato and of Leibnitz—the theory which I have myself adopted, and which, on former occasions, I have so fully developed from this chair.

Ideas, therefore, are not mere words; nor are they beings. They are conceptions of human reason; and the most rigorous analysis forces us to refer them, to the eternal principle of human reason, to absolute reason. To this reason alone they belong; and they are only as it were loaned to all other perceptions of reason. It is there that they exist; but in what manner? We need not push this inquiry far; they exist from the existence of intelligence; they are nothing else than modes of the existence of eternal reason. Now the mode of existence proper to eternal reason, and to absolute intelligence, is purely intellectual and ideal. Here all discussion must cease; for intelligence is explicable only by itself; and nothing but intelligence attests and vouches for existence itself. And you will please to remark, that in considering with Plato and Leibnitz, ideas as modes of the existence of eternal intelligence, we ascribe to that intelligence, that which is essential to its being a true intelligence, that is, self-consciousness; for the essential property of intelligence is not to be able to know, but really to know. On what condition do we possess intelligence?

We do not become intelligent merely by the existence of a principle of intelligence within us, but on the condition that this principle be developed, that is to say, that it go forth from itself, in order that it may lay hold upon itself, as the object of its own intelligence. The condition of intelligence, is difference; and an act of knowledge can take place only, where more events are given than one. Unity does not suffice for conception; for variety is equally necessary to its existence; nor is variety alone sufficient to it; for it also requires the existence of an intimate connexion between the principle of unity and the variety which it unites, without which, this variety not being perceived by the unity, the one is as if it could not perceive and the other is as if it could not be perceived. If we look into ourselves, we see that what constitutes intelligence in our feeble consciousness is, that there be many terms, whereof one perceives the other, and the second is perceived by the first. This is to know ourselves, that is, to comprehend ourselves; this is intelligence. Intelligence without consciousness is the abstract possibility of intelligence, not actual intelligence; and consciousness implies both diversity and difference. Transfer these principles, from human intelligence to absolute intelligence, that is to say, refer human ideas to that only intelligence to which they can possibly belong, and you have, if I may so express myself,

the life of absolute intelligence; you have this intelligence with the whole developement of the elements which are necessary to its being a true intelligence, you have all the momenta, whose relation and whose movement constitute the reality of knowledge.

Let us recapitulate. There are, in human reason, two elements, and their relation; that is to say, three elements, three ideas. The existence of these three ideas is not an arbitrary fiction of human reason; for, in their triplicity and in their unity, they constitute the very foundation of human reason. They appear there, to govern it, as reason appears in man, to govern him. That which was true in reason humanly considered, subsists in reason considered in itself; that which forms the foundation of our reason, forms the foundation of eternal reason; and that is a triplicity which resolves itself into unity, and an unity which developes itself into triplicity. The unity of this triplicity, alone, is real; and at the same time, this unity would utterly perish, if limited to either of the three elements which are necessary to its existence; they have all the same logical value, and constitute one indecomposable unity. What is this unity? The divine intelligence itself. Up to this height, gentlemen, does our intelligence upon the wings of ideas — to speak with Plato — elevate itself. Here is that thrice holy God, whom the family of man recognises and

adores, and before whom the octogenary author of the *système du monde*, bowed and uncovered his head, whenever he was named. But we are now above the world, above humanity, above human reason. We are no longer in nature and in humanity ; we are only in the world of ideas. Are we permitted to hope — since we are not now inquiring into either nature or humanity — that this theory may escape the accusation of pantheism ? Pantheism is at this day, the bugbear of feeble imaginations ; we shall, at some other time, see what pantheism is : in the mean time, I hope that I shall not be charged with confounding together, the world, and that eternal wisdom, which, prior to the world and to humanity, exists with that triple existence, which is inherent in its nature. But if, at this elevation, philosophy escapes the charge of pantheism, she will not deny the accusation of wishing to penetrate into the depths of the divine essence, which common opinion declares to be incomprehensible. There are those who would have it incomprehensible. There are men, reasonable beings, whose vocation it is to comprehend, and who believe in the existence of God, but who will believe in it only under the express condition that this existence is incomprehensible. What does this mean ? Do they assert that this existence is absolutely incomprehensible ? But that which is absolutely incomprehensible, can have no relations which connect

it with our intelligence, nor can it be in any wise admitted by us. A God who is absolutely incomprehensible by us, is a God who, in regard to us, does not exist. In truth, what would a God be to us, who had not seen fit to give to us some portion of himself, and so much of intelligence as might enable his wretched creature to elevate himself even unto Him, to comprehend Him, to believe in Him? Gentlemen, what is it — to believe? It is, in a certain degree, to comprehend. Faith, whatever be its form, whatever be its object, whether vulgar or sublime — faith cannot but be the consent of reason to that which reason comprehends as true. This is the foundation of all faith. Take away the possibility of knowing, and there remains nothing to believe; for the very root of faith is removed. Will it be said that God is not altogether incomprehensible? That he is somewhat comprehensible? Be it so; but let the measure of this be determined; and then I will maintain, that it is precisely the measure of the comprehensibility of God, which will be the measure of human faith. So little is God incomprehensible, that his nature is constituted by ideas — by *those* ideas, whose nature it is to be intelligible. Many inquiries have indeed been made, to know whether ideas do or do not represent, whether they are or are not conformed to their objects. But in truth, the question is not whether ideas are representa-



tive, for ideas are above every thing; and the true philosophical question, is whether things are representative; for ideas are not the reflection of things, but things are the reflection of ideas. God, the substance of ideas, is essentially intelligent, and essentially intelligible. I will go farther; and I will reply from the height of Christian orthodoxy to the reproach implied by the charge of pusillanimous mysticism. What is the theory which I have just stated? It is the very foundation of the Christian religion. The God of Christians is both threefold and one, and the charges which are brought against the doctrine I teach, must extend even to the Christian Trinity. The dogma of the Trinity is the revelation of the Divine Essence, illuminated in its whole depth, and brought within the scope of thought. It does not seem that Christianity regards the divine essence as inaccessible, or interdicted to human intelligence; for it gives to the humblest mind instruction concerning it; it is the first truth which it teaches us in our childhood. But, it may be asked, do you forget that this truth is a mystery? I answer, no, I do not forget it; but neither do I forget that this mystery is a truth. Moreover, I will speak plainly and unequivocally upon this point. Mystery is a word which belongs, not to the vocabulary of philosophy, but to that of religion. Mysticism is the necessary form of all religion, considered merely

as religion ; but under this form are ideas which may be approached and comprehended. In saying this, I but repeat what has been asserted before my time by the greatest doctors of the church, by St. Thomas, St. Anselm of Canterbury, and, in the seventeenth century, by Bonnet himself, at the close of his *Universal History*. These great men have attempted an explanation of mysteries, and amongst others, of the mystery of the most Holy Trinity ; therefore this mystery, all holy and sacred as it was in their eyes, contained ideas which it was possible to disengage from their form. The symbolical and mystical form is inherent in religion, it is, in the present instance, borrowed from the most interior and most touching relations of humanity. But again, if the form is holy, the ideas which are beneath it are also holy ; and these are the ideas which philosophy disengages, and which it considers by themselves. Let us leave to religion the form which is its own ; in this place it will always be regarded with the most profound and most sincere respect ; but, at the same time, without infringing upon the rights of religion, I have defended, and I shall never cease to defend, the rights of philosophy. Now, it is the right and the duty of philosophy, — with every reservation of the most profound respect for the religious form, — to comprehend nothing and to admit nothing, but in so far as it is true in itself, and in the form of ideas.

The religious form and the philosophical form, to speak plainly, are different from each other ; but at the same time the contents, if I may so express myself, of religion and of philosophy are the same. It is therefore childish to insist upon hostilities regarding the difference of form, when the contents are identically the same. Religion is the philosophy of the human race collectively ; a small number of men go further ; but, while they consider religion and philosophy as essentially the same, they most profoundly venerate religion in all its forms ; nor do they hold in reverence religion, by a kind of philosophical indulgence, which would be altogether out of place ; but they sincerely reverence it, because it is the form of truth in itself.

God is ; He is, with all that constitutes his true existence ; He is, with three necessary elements of intellectual existence. We must go on, gentlemen ; we must proceed, from the idea of God to that of the universe ; but how are we to proceed thither ? What is the road that leads from God to the universe ? It is — creation. And what is creation ? What is it — to create ? Shall I state to you its vulgar definition ? It is this, “to create, is to make something out of nothing,” that is, to draw something forth out of nothing ; and this definition must necessarily appear to be very satisfactory ; for, to this very day, it is every where and continually repeated. Now, Leucippus, Epicurus, Lu-

cretius, Bayle, Spinosā, and indeed all whose powers of thought are somewhat exercised, demonstrate, but too easily, that from nothing, nothing can be drawn forth, that out of nothing, nothing can come forth; whence it follows, that creation is impossible. Yet by pursuing a different route, our investigations arrive at this very different result, viz. that creation is, I do not say possible, but necessary. But, in the first place, let us look a little into this definition, — that to create, is to draw forth from nothingness. This definition is founded upon the very identical idea, of nothingness. But what is this idea? It is a purely negative idea. The mind of man possesses the power of making suppositions of every kind; he may, for instance, in the very presence of reality suppose its contrary; but truly, it is a most extravagant folly, from the mere possibility of a supposition, to infer the truth of that supposition. This supposition however has, in addition to those of many others, the misfortune of involving an absolute contradiction. Nothingness is the denial of all existence; but what is that, which in this instance, denies existence? Who denies it? It is thought; that is, you who think; so that you who think, and who exist, inasmuch as you think, and because you think, and who know that you exist, because you know that you think, — you yourself, in denying existence, deny your own existence, your own

thought, and your own denial of existence. If you will attend to the principle of your hypothesis, you will find, either that it destroys your hypothesis, or that your hypothesis will destroy its own principle. What is said of doubt, what Descartes has demonstrated in regard to doubt, applies with greater force to the idea of nothingness. To doubt is to believe; for to doubt, is to think. Does he who doubts believe that he doubts, or does he doubt whether he doubt or not? If he doubt whether he doubt or not, he destroys his own skepticism; and if he believes that he doubts, he destroys it again. Just so, to think is to be, and to know that we are; it is to affirm existence; now, to form the hypothetical supposition of nothingness, is to think; therefore, it is to be and to know that we are; therefore, it is to construct the hypothesis of nothingness upon the supposition contradictory to it, that is, upon the supposition of the existence of thought, and of him who thinks. Vainly should we strive to go beyond thought, and to escape from the idea of existence. Every negation is founded upon some affirmation; every hypothetical supposition of nothingness, implies as its necessary condition, the supposition of existence and of the existence of him who makes this very supposition of nothingness.

We must therefore abandon the definition, that, to create is to draw forth from nothingness; for

nothingness is a chimera of thought implying a contradiction. Now, in abandoning this definition, we abandon its consequences; and the immediate consequence of abandoning the hypothesis of nothingness as a condition of existence, is another hypothesis; for, once entered upon the career of hypothesis, we go on from one to another, without being able to get out of that career. Since God cannot create but by drawing forth from nothingness, and as nothing can be drawn forth from nothing, and nevertheless, the world, incontestably, is, and could not have been drawn forth from nothing, it follows that it has not been created; whence it follows again, that it is independent of God, and that it formed itself, by virtue of its proper nature, and of the laws which are derived from its nature. Hence follows another hypothesis, that of a dualism, in which God is on one side and the world on the other, which is an absurdity. For all the conditions of the existence of God are precisely absolute contradictions of the independent existence of the world. If the world is independent, it is sufficient for itself; it is absolute, eternal, infinite, almighty; and God, if he is independent of the world, must be absolute, eternal, almighty. Here, therefore, are two entire powers, in contradiction, one with the other. I will not plunge farther into this abyss of hypotheses and of absurdities.

What is, to create ? — not according to the hypothetical method, but the method we have followed, — that method which always borrows from human consciousness that which, by a higher induction, it afterwards applies to the divine essence. To create, is a thing which it is not difficult to conceive, for it is a thing which we do at every moment ; in fact, we create whenever we perform a free action. I will, I form a resolution, I form another, and another ; I modify it, I suspend it, I pursue it. What is it that I do ? I produce an effect which I do not refer to any other person, which I refer to myself as its cause, and as its only cause, so that, in regard to the existence of this effect, I seek no cause above and beyond myself. This is to create. We create a free action, we create it, I say, for we do not refer it to any principle superior to ourselves ; we impute it to ourselves exclusively. It was not ; it begins to be, by virtue of that principle of causality which we possess. Thus, to cause is to create ; but with what ? with nothing ? Certainly not. On the contrary, with that which is the very foundation of our existence ; that is to say, with all our creative force, all our liberty, all our voluntary activity, with our personality. Man does not draw forth from nothingness the act which he has not yet done and is about to do ; he draws it forth from the power which he has to do it ; from himself.

Here is the type of a creation. The divine creation is the same in its nature. God, if he is a cause, can create ; and if he is an absolute cause, he cannot but create ; and in creating the universe he does not draw it forth from nothingness, but from himself ; from that power of causation, and of creation, of which we, feeble men, possess a portion ; and all the difference between our creation and that of God, is the general difference between God and man, the difference between absolute cause and a relative cause.

I create, for I cause, I produce an effect ; but this effect expires under the very eye of him who produces it ; it scarcely extends beyond his consciousness ; often it dies there, and it never goes far beyond it ; and thus, in all the energy of his creative force, man finds very easily its limits. These limits, in the interior world, are my passions, my weaknesses ; without, they are the world itself, which opposes the motions of my volition. I wish to produce a motion, and often I produce only the volition of motion ; the most paltry accident palsies my arm ; the most vulgar obstacle resists my power ; and my creations, like my creative power, are relative, contingent, bounded ; but after all, they are creations, and there, is the type of the conception of the divine creation.

God therefore creates ; he creates by virtue of his creative power ; he draws forth the world, not



from nothingness which is not, but from Him who is absolute existence. An absolute creative force, which cannot but pass into act, being eminently his characteristic, it follows, not that creation is possible, but that it is necessary ; it follows, that God is creating without cessation and infinitely, and that creation is inexhaustible and sustains itself constantly. We may go further. The creations of God are from himself ; therefore he creates with all the characteristics which we have recognised in him, and which pass necessarily into his creations. God is in the universe, as the cause is in its effect ; as we ourselves, feeble and bounded causes, are, in so far as we are causes, in the feeble and bounded effects which we produce. And, if God is, in our consciousness, the unity of being and of intelligence and of power, with that variety which is inherent in him, and with the relation, equally necessary and equally eternal, which unites these two terms ; it follows, that all these characteristics are also in the world, and in visible existence. Therefore, creation is not an evil, but a good ; and thus do the holy scriptures represent this truth, “and God saw that it was good.” Why ? because it was more or less conformed to Him.

Thus, gentlemen, we behold the universe created, necessarily created, and manifesting Him who created it. But this manifestation, in which the principle of manifestation renders itself apparent, does

not exhaust that principle. Let me explain myself. I will, and I produce an act of volition; my voluntary force appeared, by this act and in it; it appeared there, for it is to it that I refer this act. Then it is there. But how is it there? Has it passed all entire into this act, so that there is nothing more left of it? No; for after having produced such an act, I may produce a new one, I may modify it, I may change it. The interior principle of causation, while developing itself in its acts, retains that which constitutes it a principle and a cause, and is not absorbed in its effects. So, if God makes himself appear in the world, if God is in the world, if God is there with all the elements which constitute his being, he is nevertheless unexhausted; and, at once one and threefold, he remains, after having produced this world, not the less perfect, in his essential unity and triplicity.

We must therefore regard in two different points of view, the manifestation of God in the world, and the subsistence of his divine essence itself; in order to see the true relation between the world and God. For it is absurd, to suppose that God, in manifesting himself, should not in some measure transfer himself into his manifestation; and it is equally absurd, to suppose that the principle of that manifestation, should not still retain, all the superiority of a cause to its effect. The universe is therefore an imperfect reflection, but still a reflection of the divine essence.

I cannot, nor do I here attempt to establish a complete theory of the external world, of the metaphysics of physic, or of the intellectual laws concealed under the laws of physical nature. But all men, the ignorant as well as the learned, see in the universe a constant harmony ; and to deny that there is harmony in the movements of the universe, would be to deny that it endures even for a moment ; because the world must needs perish at once, if its movements were destitute of harmony. But harmony supposes unity. Does it suppose nothing more ? It certainly does, gentlemen ; for unity may produce harmony, but unity is not harmony. In harmony, variety already exists ; moreover, there also exists in it a relation of variety to unity ; a mingling of them together in perfect proportions ; and herein consists the harmony and the life of the universe. Therefore we perceive the world to be a beautiful object ; and, it is this interior relation between unity and variety, which constitutes the beauty of this world ; it is this same relation, which, while it causes its existence, its duration and its beauty, gives to its laws the character of beneficence ; for these laws, harmonious in themselves, produce harmony on all sides. These, however, are but generalities. Let us enter into details, and examine the different spheres into which science has divided the world ; and you will find there the same characters which the general

aspect of nature had offered to you. Take mechanics, astronomy, physics ; these are the theatre, the basis of all ulterior phenomena. What do you find there ? Two forces, at once opposed and connected. You find in the first place, infinite divisibility, or in other words, universal expansion. Now, infinite divisibility, is nothing more than the movement of unity into variety, conceived to be without limits. Suppose that it be really without limits, and the dissolution of all things would be the necessary consequence. In fact, when infinite divisibility has no counterpoise, every thing divides and subdivides itself infinitely ; the very elements which result from this subdivision, go on to subdivide themselves. If this tendency to divisibility be neither exhausted nor resisted, there is no longer any contiguity in space, or any continuity in time ; there are no distinct elements, nor can any thing exist, but indefinite qualities, subject neither to enumeration, to composition, nor to addition. This law, this tendency to infinite divisibility, certainly exists in the world ; but how does it exist there ? On condition of the existence of another law, which is that of universal attraction. Attraction is the return of variety to unity, as expansion is the movement of unity into variety. And the world subsists only, because these two universal laws are in relation to each other, and mutually form a counterpoise, and thereby an equilibrium ; in a word, be-

cause they are in harmony. Let us now ascend the scale of existence, and examine the different spheres of which it is composed. Go from mechanics, astronomy, and physics, to chemistry, to vegetable and animal physiology. There again, you discover two movements and their relation; cohesion with its opposite, assimilation with its opposite, and the interior relation which unites both. I shall proceed no farther in insisting upon these truths. These grand results of natural science, are already beginning, in France, to force their way into public notice, which is no longer so exclusively attracted by the labors of scientific detail, as was heretofore the case; and they begin to excite a lively interest in all thinking minds. Already, there begins to exist amongst us, a philosophy of nature, — elsewhere, more advanced perhaps, but more hypothetical; here, more circumspect, but with great prospects for the future. I have contented myself, with rapidly tracing for you, some of its most striking features, preparatory to the exclusive consideration of humanity, at which we now arrive.

In universal life nothing perishes; every thing is metamorphosed and appears anew; mechanics and physics reappear in chemistry, and chemistry in vegetable physiology, which again finds a place in the economy of animal nature. All these antecedents, all these degrees of life, are also in humanity. Humanity is, all this added to the knowledge of

all this ; in humanity, the constituent elements of all existence are brought under the eye of consciousness.

The study of consciousness is the study of humanity. The study of consciousness is called, in the language of philosophy, psychology. Now if the whole external world reappears in man, in the same manner as the whole world reflects God ; if all the momenta of the divine essence pass into the world, and return into the consciousness of man ; we may estimate the high rank of man in creation, and of psychology in science. Man is a universe in miniature ; psychology is universal science concentrated. Psychology contains and reflects every thing — both that which is of God and that which is of the world — under the precise and determinate angle of consciousness ; every thing is brought within a narrow compass, but every thing is there. In consciousness, as in the eternal world, there are, doubtless, thousands and thousands of phenomena. But, just as the exterior world may be gathered under two great laws and their relation, so all the facts of consciousness may be gathered, and (as, on a former occasion, I have demonstrated) are gathered, into one, constant, permanent, and universal fact, which subsists under all possible circumstances, which takes place in the consciousness of the peasant as in that of a Leibnitz, which is in all consciousness, on one condition

only, viz. that there be an act of consciousness. This fact is the most common and the most sublime; the most common, because it is in all consciousness; the most sublime, because it involves consequences of immense importance. It is the fact of human existence perceived by man; it is humanity's knowledge of itself. It contains the whole of psychology.

In psychological researches there is a peculiar art; for reflection acts, as it were, in opposition to our nature; this art is not to be learnt in a day; for we do not learn, readily, to bend our thoughts inwardly, without long exercise, habitual perseverance, and a laborious apprenticeship. Instead, therefore, of entering into a profound analysis of the fact of consciousness, in which my audience might find it difficult to follow me, I shall only present to you, and briefly, the general characteristics of this fact.

So long as man does not know, and perceive, and is conscious of his own existence, he neither knows nor perceives any thing; for we can know nothing but inasmuch as we are the objects of our own perception, inasmuch as we know that we are; all knowledge implies the knowledge of one's self—not a fully developed knowledge, but so much knowledge at least as consists in knowing that we are.

While man knows not himself, he is as if he

were not; but from the moment that he does know himself, (I repeat that I do not speak here of a developed and scientific knowledge) he knows himself only on condition that he knows every thing else in the same manner in which he knows himself. Every thing is given in and by every thing; and man, in perceiving himself, in approaching himself, already touches upon the knowledge of every thing to which he can afterwards attain.

When I perceive myself, I distinguish myself from all which is not me; and in distinguishing myself from all that is not me, I do two things. First, I affirm my own existence; secondly, I also affirm the existence of that from which I distinguish myself. I cannot call myself *me*, I cannot perceive myself to be the being whom I call me, without confounding it with any other being foreign from itself, unless I distinguish myself from all the rest; and, to distinguish myself from any thing, is to suppose that the thing, from which I distinguish myself, exists. Man, then, does not discover his own existence, without discovering, at the same time, the existence of some other thing, which surrounds, and therefore limits him. In fact, reenter for a moment into yourself, and you will find that the *me*, which you perceive to be yourself, is a *me*, limited on all sides by foreign objects. This *me* is therefore finite; and it is only,



inasmuch as it is limited and finite, that it is *me*. But if the exterior world bounds the *me*, and opposes to it a kind of obstacle in every direction, so the *me* acts upon the world, modifies it, opposes itself to its action, and impresses its own action upon it to a certain degree; and this degree, however feeble, becomes to the world, a bound, a limit. Thus the world, which, in its opposition to the *me*, is the limit of the *me*, or is the *not me*, is in its turn, opposed, modified, limited, by the *me*; which, while it is obliged to acknowledge itself limited, bounded and finite; yet also impresses the character of bounded, limited and finite, upon the exterior world,—the *not me*, from which it is distinguished. It is in this mutual opposition, that we lay hold upon yourselves; this opposition is permanent in the consciousness of man; it endures while there is any consciousness. But this opposition resolves itself into one single notion, that of *the finite*. The *me*, which we are, is finite; the *not me*, which limits, and is limited by the *me*, is also finite; they are so in different degrees, but both are so; we are therefore still in the sphere of the finite. Is there nothing else in our consciousness?

Yes, gentlemen, while consciousness apprehends the *me* as finite, in its opposition to the *not me* which is also finite, it refers both this *me* and this *not me* which are finite, bounded, relative, contingent — to a superior, absolute, and necessary unity,

which contains and explains them, and which has all the characteristics that are in opposition to those which the me finds in itself, and in that not me which is analagous to it. This unity is absolute, whilst the me and the not me are relative. This unity is a substance, whilst the me and the not me, though substantial by their relation to substance, are in themselves simple phenomena, limited as phenomena, vanishing and reappearing as phenomena. Moreover, this superior unity is not a substance only, it is also a cause. Indeed, the me only apprehends itself in its acts, as a cause which acts upon the exterior world; and the exterior world comes within the knowledge of the me, only by the impressions it produces, by the sensations which the me experiences, which it does not cause and cannot destroy, and which it therefore cannot refer to itself, and consequently refers to something foreign to itself, as a cause; this foreign cause, is the world; and as it is a finite cause, and as the me is also a finite cause, therefore that unity, that substance, which comprehends both the me and the not me, being also a cause, must consequently be in its nature, an infinite cause.

It is not in the power of man, to destroy a single one of these three terms of the fact of consciousness. In them is the foundation of consciousness,—the stuff, of which are made all our ulterior ideas, all our convictions. At all times, and under the

most common circumstances of our existence, we believe that there is an exterior world which also exists, and which is, like ourselves, limited, variable and finite; and we refer, both this world and ourselves, to something better, beyond which it is impossible for us to conceive any thing, of existence, of duration, of power, and of wisdom. Consciousness, therefore, has three momenta; and thus, it is like nature which it completes, and like the divine essence which it manifests.

The identity of consciousness, constitutes the identity of human knowledge. It is upon this common ground, that time delineates the differences which distinguish man from man. The three terms of consciousness form there a primitive synthesis, more or less confused. Often, man stops there; and this is the case with the plurality of mankind. Sometimes he goes beyond it, he adds analysis to this primitive synthesis, developes it by reflection, disentangles the complex phenomenon, by submitting it to a light, which falling successively upon each of the three terms, illustrates each by the others; and then what happens? The man knows better, what he knew before. Herein consists all the difference possible, between man and man.

Such is the superiority of reflection and of human science over the primitive beliefs of consciousness; it is no greater than this. We must add, that it may so happen, that reflection, which is successive

and does not extend to more than one of the terms of consciousness at the same time, being preoccupied with one and dwelling upon it exclusively — may mutilate consciousness, and substitute for a confused, but complete synthesis of perception, an imperfect analysis, and an exclusive science.

Now, what I say of the individual, I say also of the human race. I have absolved the individual and human nature; I have rendered homage to Providence, in finding within the consciousness of the most ordinary man, the same three terms which exist in the most developed scientific reflection, which are in nature, which are in God himself. The only difference between individuals, consists in a greater or less degree of clearness in the manner in which the influence of these elements are appreciated, and in that preoccupation which causes one or another of these elements to predominate in the views of his reflection. It is so with the human race. Mankind in the first generation as in the last, possesses neither more nor less, than the three elements which we have designated. It is not in the power of time to make a fourth. Herein consists the unity and the identity of the human race. There can be no history of that which is one, identical with itself, permanent, without change, and without motion; and if the human race were always identical with itself, if it did not sustain great differences in its condition, there

would be no history ; for there can be no history, but of that which changes. Variety, in its unity, is the element of history. The power of variety, in the hands of time, and upon the theatre of history, produces on a great scale, that which passes in miniature upon the limited theatre of individual consciousness. The human race undergoes the same changes in the course of its destiny, which the individual sustains within the limits of his own. The human race has always and permanently, the three fundamental elements of consciousness, and admits of differences, only, in the degree of clearness with which it recognises them, and of the attention which it gives to each. Now, the characterizing differences which divide the developement of the consciousness of individuals, are the different epochs of his life ; and in the same way, the different transformations which the human race undergoes in its interior developement, become the epochs of the life of the human race ; that is to say, the distinct epochs of history.

But what are, what must be the different epochs of the history of the human race ; and in what order do they succeed each other ? To answer this, we must know in what order are developed the differences which we have designated in the consciousness of the human race, and in that of the individual. Is it the idea of the infinite which first occupies humanity, or is it the idea of the finite ? and if the

latter, which of the two terms of the finite makes the first impression ? This we must know with precision, if we would determine with rigorous accuracy, the necessary order of the great epochs of history ; and, it is to the examination and the solution of this problem, that our next lecture shall be devoted.



## LECTURE VI.

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Recapitulation. Return to the fundamental fact of consciousness. Distinction between the form given to this fact by reflection, and its spontaneous form. Character of spontaneity. That it is the fact of the spontaneity of reason, which manifests the absolute independence, and the impersonality of rational truths. Refutation of Kant. Identity of human reason in the spontaneous perception of truth. Reflection — the element of difference. Necessity and utility of reflection. History. The condition of all developement — time. The condition of time — succession. The conditions of succession — particularity, division, contradiction; necessity and utility of all this. The end and aim of history. Of true perfectability. That not more than three great epochs of history can be given.

GENTLEMEN, —

IN the last lecture, we have advanced far. Beginning with human reason, our inquiries have ascended to God himself, to return to nature, and thence to arrive at humanity. This is the circuit prescribed by the nature of things — it is that of philosophy. We have gone through all the different parts of philosophy rapidly, it is true, but in the strictest concatenation, and the very order of necessity itself. It was necessary, gentlemen, to begin with human reason; it was the legitimate point of



departure, for it was the only point of departure possible. It is with human reason that we do all; that we comprehend, that we reject, or admit every thing; it was therefore necessary for us to commence with inquiries concerning human reason itself.

In human reason we have found three ideas, which it does not constitute, but which rule over it, and govern it in all its applications. The passage from these ideas to God, was not difficult; for these ideas are God himself. To proceed from reason to God, no long and circuitous route, and no foreign mediators are wanted; the only mediator is truth; truth, which proceeding not from man, reports its own origin from a more elevated source. It was impossible to stop there. God, being both a cause and a power, at the same time that he is a substance and an intelligence, could not but manifest himself. The manifestation of God, is implied by the very idea of God; and from God to the world, our progress continued still to be necessary. In the world, in the effect, we have recognised the cause; in harmony, which is eminently the character of this world, we have recognised the relation and connexion of variety with unity, that is, the whole train of ideas. The interior movement of the energies of the world, in the necessary progress of their developement, from degree to degree, from kingdom to kingdom, produces that wondrous being, whose

fundamental attribute is consciousness ; and in this consciousness, we have met with precisely the same elements which, subject to different conditions, we had already found in nature ; — the same elements which we had recognised in God himself. The fundamental fact of consciousness is a complex phenomenon composed of three terms, namely, the *me* and the *not me*, bounded, limited, finite ; then the idea of something different from these, of the infinite, of unity, &c. ; and again, the relation of the *me* and the *not me*, that is — of the finite, to the infinite, which contains and unfolds it : these, therefore, are the three terms of which the fundamental fact of consciousness is composed. Now, this fact, transferred from the individual, into the species and into history, is the basis of all the ulterior developements of humanity. It therefore becomes important for us to examine this fact attentively, and to gather from it, its different characteristic marks, which a profound analysis may discover.

If, at the present time, any one of you bend his thoughts inwardly, and enter into his own consciousness, he finds there the three elements which we have designated. First, you find yourself, — a being evidently bounded, limited, finite. When in possession of the idea of what is limited, bounded, finite, it does not suffice ; you cannot stop there ; for you are conscious that the clear and determinate notion of the finite, implies that of the infinite. At

the present time, when intelligence has been developed in languages, which are, what intelligence has made them, the finite supposes the infinite, as the infinite supposes the finite; each contrary calls upon its opposite contrary; and the case, with the relation itself, is the same as with the terms which, by serving as its basis in the memory, express it; both are equally evident, and equally necessary. It is this fundamental phenomenon of consciousness, verified, described, and developed, which enables you to form, or has enabled others to form, an idea of the categories of the finite and the infinite, of the particular and the universal, of the contingent and the necessary, of variety and unity, &c. All this is true; nor is it possible for you even to pronounce one of these names, without finding that the other spontaneously occurs to you; and it occurs to you, because the idea which it represents enters irresistibly into your consciousness. This happens to you now; but was it always the case? Remark the eminent characteristic, of the fact, to which I have been calling your attention; it is this, — that when one of these three terms is given, the other two are given also; you conceive them, you affirm them, and if, by way of experiment, you try whether you can deny them, you find that it is not in your power; the impossibility of not doing what you do, of not conceiving what you do conceive, presents itself to your own mind; you per-

ceive that a trial has been made to doubt or to deny them, and at the same time you are convinced that it is impossible. The necessity of a conception, that is to say, the conviction of having tried to deny its truth, and discovered your inability to do so, is the distinguishing character of every phenomenon, such as it now manifests itself in consciousness. But let me ask you, if intelligence commences with a denial. I shall not give myself the trouble of demonstrating that intelligence does not commence with a denial, seeing that every denial supposes an affirmation of denying, as indeed every reflection supposes the existence of something anterior to itself, to which it can be applied. You commence neither with reflection, nor with negation; you commence with an operation, which it is our present business to determine, and which is the necessary basis, both of negation and of reflection. But, can reflection, which supposes an operation anterior to itself, add any terms to those which are given by that operation, and which logic demonstrates to be the necessary basis of all reflection? This would imply, that reflection makes some addition to the results of the operation to which it is applied. To reflect, is to turn again to that which was; it is, to return by the aid of memory, to the past, and to present it to the inspection of consciousness. Reflection adds *itself* to that which was, it throws light upon that which is, but it creates nothing.

Hence it follows, that if reflection creates nothing, and if it presupposes some anterior operation, then, by that anterior operation, as many terms must be given, as occur in the phenomenon such as it is perceived, and such as reflection discovers it to be in our consciousness. By overcoming negations, by putting them to the trial and discovering their impossibility, — by reflection, nothing can be given that was not contained in the first affirmation, in the phenomenon to which reflection was applied. This is a conclusion drawn by the most common logic ; but, if you possess the strength to penetrate more deeply into the recesses of your own mind, to pierce through reflection, in order to arrive at the basis of all reflection, you will convert into a fact of conscious perception, the conclusion which logic forces upon you.

I wish to think, and I think. But, gentlemen, does it not sometimes happen, that you think without having wished to think ? Transfer your thought at once, to the first fact of intelligence ; for some fact of intelligence must have been the first, some phenomenon must be given in which it manifested itself for the first time. Before this first fact, you were not conscious of your existence ; or if you were conscious of your existence, (as intelligence was not yet developed in you,) you did not know that you were an intelligence capable of developing itself ; for intelligence manifests itself

only by its acts, — by one act at least ; and before this act, you were not able even to surmise its existence, and were absolutely ignorant of it. Now, when intelligence manifested itself for the first time, it is evident that its manifestation could not have been a voluntary act. It manifested itself, nevertheless ; and you possess a consciousness of it, more or less vivid. Endeavor to take your thought, unawares, in the fact of thinking without having wished to think ; and you will thus find yourself at that point, which intelligence takes as its point of departure ; and thus you may, at the present moment, observe, with more or less accuracy, that which did occur, and must necessarily have occurred, in the first fact of your intelligence, at a time which is no more, and which never can return. To think, is to affirm ; the first affirmation into which nothing of volition has entered, and, by consequence, nothing of reflection, cannot be an affirmation mingled with negation ; for our first acts are not denials : it must therefore have been an affirmation without negation, an instinctive perception of truth, an entirely instinctive developement of thought. The function properly belonging to the principle of thought, is to think ; whether you intervene, or do not intervene, thought is developed ; it exists first in the state of an affirmation, not yet mingled with any negation ; it is a pure affirmation, a pure perception. Now, what is contained in this

primitive intuition ? All that, at a later period, will be contained in reflection : but, if all is there, all is there on other conditions. We do not commence with seeking ourselves, for this would imply, that we already know that we exist ; but, on a certain day, at a certain hour, at a certain moment — a moment, solemn in existence — without having sought ourselves, we find ourselves ; thought, in its instinctive developement, discloses to us that we are ; we affirm our existence with profound assurance, with an assurance unmingled with any negation whatsoever. We perceive our existence ; but we do not discern, with all the distinctness of reflection, our proper character, which is that of being limited and bounded ; we do not precisely distinguish ourselves from the world, nor do we very precisely discern the character of this world ; we find ourselves, and we find the world ; and besides these, we perceive the existence of something different from these, to which, naturally and instinctively, we refer both ourselves and the world ; we distinguish all this, but without very strictly discriminating between its component parts. Intelligence, in developing itself, perceives all that is ; but it is not able to perceive it in a reflective, distinct, and negative manner ; and although it perceives it with perfect assurance, it perceives it somewhat confusedly.

Such, gentlemen, is the original fact of affirma-

tion, anterior to all reflection, and without any negation ; it is this fact which the human race have called inspiration. Inspiration is, in all languages distinguished from reflection ; it is the perception of truth, (I mean, of essential and fundamental truths) without the intervention of volition and of individual personality. Inspiration belongs not to us. We are but simple spectators of the fact ; we are not agents ; at least, all our agency consists in being made conscious of what passes in our view ; in this, there is, doubtless, already some activity ; but it is not an activity, reflected upon, voluntary, and personal. The characteristic mark of inspiration is enthusiasm ; it is accompanied with that forcible emotion, which bears the soul away from its ordinary and subaltern state, and disengages from it, the sublime and godlike portion of its nature :

*Est Deus, in nobis, agitante calescimus illo.*

In effect, when man is conscious of the wondrous fact of inspiration and enthusiasm, and feels himself unable to refer it to himself, he refers it to God ; and gives to this original and pure affirmation, the name of revelation. Is the human race wrong, gentlemen ? When man, conscious of his feeble intervention in the fact of inspiration, refers to God, the truths which he has not made, and which rule over him, does he deceive himself ? No, certainly not ; for what is God ? I have told you ; he is thought in itself, with its fundamental momenta ;



he is eternal reason, the substance and the cause of the truths which man perceives. When man, therefore, refers to God that truth which he cannot refer either to this world, or to his own personality, he refers it to Him, to whom he ought to refer it : and the absolute affirmation of truth, without reflection, — inspiration, — enthusiasm, is veritable revelation. This is the reason why, in the cradle of civilization, the man who, in a higher degree than his fellow creatures, possesses the marvellous gift of inspiration, passes in their sight, for the trusted friend and interpreter of God. He is so, gentlemen, in respect to others, because he is so in respect to himself ; and he is so in respect to himself, because in a philosophic sense, he is so in fact : and this is the sacred origin of prophecies, of pontificates, and of religious rites.\*

You will also please to remark, gentlemen, a particular effect of the phenomenon of inspiration. When the mind of man, hurried by the vivid and rapid perception of truth, and transported with inspiration and enthusiasm, attempts to produce outwardly what passes within him, he can express it only in language of the same character with the phenomenon which he strives to render intelligible. The necessary form, the language of inspiration, is poetry ; and the first oration, is a hymn. We

\* See Note A.

do not commence with prose, but with poetry ; for we do not commence with reflection, but with intuition and absolute affirmation.

It follows again, that we do not commence with science, but with faith ; with faith in reason, for no other faith is given. In fact, in the strictest sense, *faith implies an unbounded confidence of belief*, provided that it be a belief in something which is not ourselves, and which therefore becomes to us a sacred and inviolable authority, to which we appeal against others, and against ourselves, which becomes the measure and the rule of our conduct and of our thought. Now, this characteristic mark of faith, which at a later period, in the struggle of religion with philosophy, is placed in opposition to reason, is precisely the essential characteristic of reason. For if it is certain, that we have faith only in that which is not ourselves ; and that every authority which ought to reign over us, should be impersonal ; it is equally certain, that nothing is less personal than reason ; that it belongs not to ourselves, that it is reason alone which, developing itself, reveals to us from on high, the truths which it forces upon us, and which, in the beginning, we receive without consulting reflection. It is this admirable and incontestable phenomenon, which identifies reason and faith with the original, irresistible, and unreflective perception of truth.

That my words may hereafter be understood in

the sense in which I intend to use them, let me say, that by "spontaneity of reason," I mean that development of reason anterior to reflection, that power of reason, to seize upon truth at first sight, to comprehend it, and to admit it, without asking or giving an account of its doing so.

It is this selfsame spontaneous reason, the rule and the measure of faith, which, when at a later period it is placed under the guidance of reflection, engenders with the aid of analysis, what philosophy will call, and has called, the categories of reason. Spontaneous and instinctive thought, enters upon its functions, by virtue of its own nature; and, first of all, it gives us ourselves, the world, and God; — the world and ourselves, with boundaries confusedly perceived, and God, without bounds; the whole, in a synthesis in which clear and obscure ideas are mingled together. By degrees, reflection and analysis shed their light upon this complex phenomenon: then all things are seen more clearly, and every thing announces and determines its existence; the me separates itself from the not me, the me and the not me, in their opposition, and in their mutual relations to each other, furnish us with clear and finite ideas; and as that which is finite, cannot suffice to its own demands, it supposes and calls upon the infinite; and thus the categories of the me and the not me, of the finite and the infinite, &c. are given. But what is the source of these

categories ? It is original perception ; the first form in which they appear, is not the form of reflection, but that of spontaneity ; and, as reflection cannot give more than spontaneity, nor analysis give more than the original synthesis which it analyzes, therefore, the categories, in their ulterior development and scientific form, can contain nothing that was not given by inspiration. And how have you obtained the categories ? I say again, you have obtained them by analysis, that is, by reflection. But the constituent element of reflection is the will, it is personality, it is you yourself. The categories obtained by reflection have, therefore, in consequence of their relation to the will and to personality, the appearance of being personal ; so much so, that some men have considered them as the laws of our nature, yet without explaining very clearly what they mean by our nature. The greatest analyzer of modern times, after having once for all, distinguished the categories from every thing that is given by sensation, from every empiristic element ; after having enumerated and classified them, and ascribed to them an irresistible force ; yet finding them at the foundation of consciousness, where all personality lies, — Kant has referred them to human nature, and formed the conclusion that they are only the laws of our personal individuality. And as we ourselves\* furnish the form of our con-

\* See Note B.

sciousness, Kant has, in his vocabulary, affixed to the categories the predicate of being subjective, and called them subjective laws, that is to say, laws of personal individuality ; so that, according to his doctrine, when we transfer into external nature, the laws by which our own individuality is governed, we make an arbitrary application of the subjective laws of our thought, by transferring them into external nature ; or, — to speak his language, — we make objective the laws of our thought, without arriving at any legitimate and veritable objectivity. Kant having wrested from sensualism the categories, left to them that character of subjectivity, which they possess in reflection. Now, if they were purely subjective or personal, we should have no right to transfer them beyond the limits of our own consciousness. Thus the external world, such as it is given to us by applying the categories, may, to us, be an object of invincible belief, but not a being existing in itself. And God also, — God may be an object of our faith, but not an object of our knowledge. Thus Kant, after having commenced with somewhat of idealism, leads to skepticism. The problem, upon the solution of which this great man suffered shipwreck, modern philosophy still finds before it.\* I have myself, on a former occasion, given a solution of it, which time has not shaken. This solution, is founded upon the

\* See Note C.

distinction between spontaneous and reflective reason. If Kant, within his own profound analysis, had seen the source of all analysis, — if, within reflection, he had seen the primitive and certain fact of pure affirmation, he would have seen, that nothing is less individually personal than reason, and particularly, as it appears in the phenomenon of pure affirmation ; — that nothing, therefore, is less subjective ; and that the truths which are thus given us are absolute truths : they are subjective, I confess, in respect to the *total me* of all consciousness ; but they are objective, inasmuch as they are independent thereof. Truth itself is absolute ; and, in like manner, what we call reason, is truly distinct from ourselves. Reason is not subjective ; what I call a subject, is *me* ; it is person, liberty, will. Reason has not any characteristic mark of individual personality, and of liberty.

Whoever said *my* truth, *your* truth ? Far from being able to constitute the truths which reason discovers to us, our honor and our glory consist in being able to participate in them.

To recapitulate. The demonstration of the independence of the truths perceived by reason, is the characteristic mark of the spontaneity of reason. Yes, gentlemen, when we speak of the world, we do not speak of it from any faith in the subject which is ourselves ; for we should then speak of it, upon the strength of an authority, foreign to

itself and altogether incompetent ; but we speak of it from faith in reason itself, which governs nature as well as humanity. When we speak of God, we have a right to speak of him ; because we speak of him according to his own dictates, according to the dictates of that reason which represents him. We are therefore in truth, — in the essence and substance of things ; we are there by virtue of reason, which, in its principle, is the veritable substance and absolute essence of all things.

Gentlemen : The fact which I have just been pointing out to you, is universal. Reflection, doubt, and skepticism, appertain to some men ; pure apperception and spontaneous faith, appertain to all ; spontaneity, is the genius of humanity, as philosophy is the genius of some men. In spontaneity, there is scarcely any difference between man and man. Doubtless there are some natures, more or less happily endowed, in whom thought clears it away more easily, and inspiration manifests itself with more brightness ; but, in the end, though with more or less of energy, thought developes itself spontaneously, in all thinking beings : and it is this identity of spontaneity, together with the identity of absolute faith which it engenders, which constitutes the identity of humankind.

What man, when he discovers himself in the act of exercising the spontaneity of his intelligence, does not believe in himself and in the world ? This

is evidently the case in respect to our personal existence, and of that of the world. It is the same, in respect to the existence of God. Leibnitz said, there is *being* in every proposition. Now, a proposition is only the expression of a thought; and in every proposition there is being, because there is being in every thought. The very idea of *being* implies, in its lowest degree, an idea, (more or less clear, yet real,) of *being* itself, that is, of God. To think, is to know that we think; it is to confide in our thought, that is, to confide in the principle of thought, that is, to believe in the existence of that principle. As this does not imply that we believe ourselves, or that we believe the world, and yet implies, that we believe; — it is evident, that, whether we know it or do not know it, it implies, that we believe in the absolute principle of thought; so that, all thought implies a spontaneous faith in God, and natural Atheism has no existence.\* I do not say only, that there exists not a language, in which this great name is not found; but if complete dictionaries of a language were placed before my eyes, in which that name were not to be found, I should not falter. Is there one man who speaks that language, who thinks, and yet places no faith in his thought? For instance, does he believe that he exists? If he believes this, I am satisfied; for if he believes that he exists, he then believes that his

\* See Note D



thought — that he believes his existence — is worthy of faith ; he therefore places faith in the principle of his thought ; — now, *there* is God. Because every thought contains faith in the principle of thought, therefore, according to my doctrine, every word pronounced with confidence, is nothing less than a profession of faith in reason in itself, that is, in God. Every word is an act of faith ; and so incontestable is this truth, that, in the cradle of societies, every primitive word is a hymn. Search in the history of languages, of societies, and of every remote epoch, and you will find nothing anterior to the lyric element, to hymns, to litanies ; such is the intensity of the truth, that every primitive conception is a spontaneous perception, the impress of faith, and of an inspiration accompanied with enthusiasm, — that is to say, of a religious emotion. There, gentlemen, I repeat, is the identity of humankind. Every where, in its instinctive and spontaneous form, reason is equal to itself, in all the generations of humanity, and in all the individuals of which these different generations are composed. Whoever has not been cut off from the inheritance of thought, has not been cut off from the inheritance of those ideas which call forth its most immediate developement, and which science, afterwards presents to him with the apparatus, and under the affrighting title, of *the categories*. In their simple and primitive form, these ideas are

every where the same. This is, in a manner, the golden age of thought. Then, gentlemen, respect humanity, which every where in this form, possesses truth. Respect humanity in all its members; for in all its members there is a ray divine of intelligence and essential fraternity, in the unity of those fundamental ideas which are derived from the most immediate developement of reason.

Nevertheless, gentlemen, within this unity, there exist differences; there exist in humankind, from century to century, from individual to individual, manifest differences. We must not deny them; we must strive to comprehend them, and to discover their origin. They can arise from one source only. The developement of reason is twofold; it is either spontaneous or reflective—spontaneity or reflection. It is either a pure and spontaneous perception of truth, with perfect assurance, and not only without any intermixture of doubt, but without even suspecting the possibility of negation; or it is a necessary conception of truth, after the assay of negation and the discovery of its absurdity; it is either a primitive and obscure synthesis, or a clear and more or less perfect analysis; no other form of thought is given. Now we have seen that spontaneity scarcely admits of essential differences. Nothing then remains, than to conclude, that the striking differences, every where visible in the human race, arise from reflection.\* A strict

\* See note E.

analysis of reflection converts this induction into the certainty of a fact. The condition of reflection is memory; and the condition of memory is time. Reflection considers the elements of thought successively, and not all at once. If it consider them successively, it considers each, for a moment at least, in a state of isolation. And as each of these elements is important, in itself, the effect which it produces may be such, that reflection may mistake this particular element of a complex phenomenon of thought, for the entire thought, and the whole phenomenon. Herein consists the danger of reflection; in this possibility, lies the possibility of error; and in this possibility of error, resides the possibility of difference. There is either no difference in the perception of truth, or these differences are of little importance; it is from error alone, (which, being essentially motive and diverse, may produce differences,) that differences can arise; and error itself originates in an incomplete and partial view of things. Herein, I repeat, consists every possibility of error; and it arises, consequently, in reflection.

But, it is also true, that, without reflection, that high degree of clearness, which results from a successive and alternating examination of the different views which may be taken of a fact, of a problem, or of any thing, would be impossible. Without reflection, man would act but an insignificant part

in the perception of truth ; nor does he properly take possession of it, and appropriate it to himself, but by reflection. Reflection, therefore, is a lofty and excellent developement of human reason ; and it is well that this developement should take place, even at the risk of all the chances of error.

If all the chances of error arise from this source alone, it follows, that no error ought to be considered as altogether extravagant, as an insane and total delusion of the mind ; for a total delusion of the mind, except in cases of actual derangement, is impossible. In fact, no error can take place, unless thought and consciousness exist ; nor can these exist, unless some necessary element of consciousness be present. If, for example, you did not believe your own thoughts, you could perceive nothing, you could not think, nor would you possess any consciousness whatsoever. Never lose sight of this. Even when it errs, still consciousness exists ; and that it may exist, at least one of the elements of consciousness must be present to the mind ; in every perception, therefore, something must be present that is real, that is, something that is true. Hence it follows, that no error is a total and absolute error ; for, in a total and absolute error, the very possibility of consciousness would perish. No error therefore is possible, which is not a partial error. But if no error be possible, unless it be only a partial error ; it follows, that

every error is accompanied with some perception of truth. Thus, if reflection, for instance, applying itself to consciousness, and trying the hypothesis of doubt and negation, should succeed in excluding one of the terms of consciousness, and if the term excluded be the infinite, — it will rest in the finite. Here, then, the infinite is denied and rejected. Be it so; but consciousness is not destroyed; and by the side of this error, there will still exist a belief in the external world, and in self-existence. The error lights upon one point, and the perception of truth upon another; but there still exists, — there always exists, — truth, in consciousness. Let not the example of the skeptic, who doubts every thing, be brought as an objection to this doctrine. I shall reply, as I replied, in my last lecture: Does he deny that he denies? Does he doubt that he doubts? I ask him only that. If he believe that he doubts, if he affirm that he doubts, then, inasmuch as he affirms that he is doubting, he affirms that he exists. He therefore believes himself; — this is something; and I would engage thus, successively to establish all the elements of general belief. Reflection, in its strongest aberrations, may always be brought back to truth; because its aberrations are always only partial; because recourse may always be had to some element of truth still existing in the mind; and because there cannot fail to exist at all times, some element

of truth, even in the mind of him who may appear to be the most absolute of skeptics. In days of crisis and agitation, together with reflection, doubt and skepticism enter into the minds of many excellent men, who sigh over and are affrighted at their own incredulity. I would undertake their defence against themselves ; I would prove to them that they always place faith in something. Regard things on their fair side, gentlemen. When you lack truth on one point, attach yourself to that portion of truth which you still possess, and increase it successively. So also, when you behold one of your fellow creatures who, not being able to deny his own existence, (an effort of strength to which few feel competent,) sets about denying the existence of the world, (no very common occurrence either,) and particularly the existence of God, (which without being so, seems more easy and is more common,) say to yourselves, and repeat it constantly, that this being is not degraded ; that he still believes, because he still affirms something ; and that his faith only lights upon, and is concentrated in a single point ; and instead of incessantly viewing him, in regard to what he wants, as an Atheist or a skeptic ; consider him rather, in regard to what still remains to him, as a man ; and you will see that in the most partial, confined and skeptical reflection, there will always still remain a very considerable element of faith, and of strong and

extensive convictions. So much for reflection. But besides reflection there still exists spontaneity, which is within reflection; and when the scholar has denied the existence of God, hear the man; ask *him*, take him at unawares, and you will see that all his words imply the idea of God; and that faith in God, is without his knowledge, at the bottom of his heart. Finally, to resume; — the indestructible spontaneity of thought, which produces and sustains every substantial truth, is ever present, even within the most skeptical reflection. Even in reflection, error is never entire — it is only partial; and it proceeds from the necessity of presenting the different elements of consciousness, successively, to the bounded, but penetrating eyesight of reflection.

Now all that I have been showing you within the limited theatre of individual consciousness, must be transferred to the theatre of universal consciousness — to history. There, also, appears the unity of humankind, together with its differences; and these, though magnified in proportion to the scene, do not change their nature. The different elements of human consciousness, are developed in history by the hand of time, only on condition of their existing successively; and consequently on condition that each of them shall make its appearance, one after the other. Now, at the instant when one of these elements makes its appearance, the human

race, who spontaneously believe every thing without distinguishing any thing, are exclusively occupied with reflecting upon that element alone which is passing before their eyes ; and in their weakness, they do not perceive the existence of any other element. They are right in believing that such an element exists ; but they are wrong in believing that it exists alone. Here, again, the error is not an insane extravagance ; it consists only in taking a view of things which is not complete.

For a particular element, which passes on the stage of history at a certain time, is insufficient to fill up the extended continuance of duration ; and consequently, after having sufficiently appeared, it is doomed to disappear : because it had a beginning — it must end. That only, which never commences and never ceases to be — is infinite, universal, and absolute. Truth, which constitutes the identity of humankind, never commenced its existence on any day, nor will it end on any morrow. But all things which one day commence to exist, and some other day cease to exist, are differences ; — they are errors. The first difference endures throughout its day, it commences and it ends ; another difference appears, and its destiny is the same ; another element of humanity claims a right to produce a new illusion, by a title similar to that of the first, and it vanishes in its turn. We confine our thought to this, as we confined our thought to the



first. We are not wrong, I say again, to believe in this ; but we are wrong to believe in this alone. Thus every new truth brings along with it a new error. Understand me, gentlemen ; — every thing is true, when considered in its own nature ; but every truth is falsified when considered exclusively. Every new truth which makes its appearance on the stage of history, produces a new error ; and yet every error contains a truth ; until, — proceeding from incomplete truths to incomplete truths, or from error to error, — the circuit of errors and truths is accomplished, the different particular elements of truth manifest themselves, disengage themselves, explain each other, and arrive at their complete developement.

At first sight, you perceive in history nothing but particular objects of your attention ; first it is some particular people, then some other people, some particular epoch, or some particular system ; from first to last, you behold nothing but particularities. Nothing appears in actual existence but under the form of some particularity. Every particularity comes into existence and consequently it also comes to its end. Then, all particularities are evanescent ; then, in history, you behold nothing but illusions ; whilst, at the same time and considered in a different point of view, you behold nothing but truths. History is a succession of truths, and it is also a succession of errors ; this is a condition

forced upon it by its very existence: for the condition of history is succession; that of succession is particularity; and the condition of particular existence, is error, diversity of error, opposition, contradiction, and misery. That which, in individual reflection, is succession and division, is in history, conflict and war. War is the most striking feature which history presents to us, — a spectacle, at its first view, full of sorrow. He, who is not in the secret of the movements by which historical events are produced, who knows not that every error encloses a truth, whose only fault is that of being incomplete, — when he contemplates history, is very apt to believe that the human race is lost in a labyrinth of perpetual error; and he sees every where, nothing but errors in conflict with each other: and, as he sees no chance that the human race, after having reached the year 1828, with a tide in which the flux and reflux of contradictory illusions have perpetually succeeded each other, should at length arrive at truth and peace; the errors and discord of past times seem to him to expand over futurity, and the spectator is overwhelmed with melancholy forebodings. These conclusions are very natural; and, at the commencement of reflection, and of our historical studies, they are almost inevitable; but we should not give way to them; we should say to ourselves, that every error is but an appearance which implies

the presence of a certain truth ; and that error, if I may so express myself, is the form under which truth appears in history. All such errors, that is, all such truths succeed each other necessarily ; they appear and they vanish, but they are not destroyed ; epochs press upon epochs, and they devour each other successively ; but it is well that they do so. For it is on this condition only that the elements of humanity are developed. We know the events that pass in our own consciousness only on condition that we have reflected upon them ; and reflection is possible only on condition that we examine the things to which it is applied, one by one, and give ourselves time to comprehend and to examine each of them separately. In like manner, an idea appears on the stage of history in its own particular form, that it there may be developed ; that all the essential momenta, all the powers of existence concealed in its bosom, may clear their way to the light, and manifest themselves. Every idea of which the developement has not been fully accomplished, is at least, as to some one of its aspects, as yet unknown ; we become fully acquainted with principles, only when we know all their consequences ; I say all of them ; for if but one is wanting, there still will remain in the principle something essential to it, of which we are ignorant ; there will still remain some corner of its truth, which has not yet been unveiled to us. That

we may know all the complications which an idea unfolds, we must examine it by itself; we must separate it from all other ideas, we must view it as a whole, in order to consider its beginning, its middle, and its end; and only when we have thus exclusively examined it, we comprehend it thoroughly, and we know what it is; for, it is only then fully unveiled to our sight. Through this process every idea must pass, in history; it there unfolds itself separately and successively; and when it has fully accomplished its developement, when all its points of view have passed within our sight, it has acted its part on the theatre of the world, and it gives place to some other idea, which passes through the same career. Are you displeased with this mobility, with this perpetual change? And do you know with what you are displeased? It is with light, with knowledge, with science. Science is acquired only by labor; in the sweat of our brow, and on the condition of perpetual exertions. Spontaneity is innocence, it is the golden age of thought; but virtue is more excellent than innocence; and virtue imposes upon us a series of perpetual conflicts. History, gentlemen, has no golden age; it commences in the reign of the iron age, with the differences and the contradictions of time and of the movements which they occasion. To be ignorant of some things, is to us — so feeble are we — the indispensable condition of knowing other things

thoroughly ; for, to confine our view to one element of knowledge at a time, is the only condition on which a consummate and profound knowledge of all its momenta is attainable.

Finally, we should never forget, that if all the points of view from which truth has been regarded, all the systems and the epochs which history describes, (though excellent in themselves,) are incomplete, and therefore, reciprocally destroy each other ; yet there still remains something which preceded and which survives them, namely, humanity itself. Humanity embraces all things, it profits by all ; and it advances always, and athwart of every thing. And when I speak of humanity, I speak of all the powers which represent it in history ; of industry, the state, religion, art, and philosophy. For instance, in actual philosophy, reason advances unceasingly. Platonism had its beginning, and Platonism came to its end. This, you may say, was a misfortune ; — but to whom ? To Platonism ; — not to humanity. For Plato was succeeded by Aristotle ; and philosophy, without losing the first, gained the other. Is Plato lost to humanity ? Do not his works still exist ? Did he not serve his time, and impress upon his century a movement, which has left its traces, and deposed a memorable element in history ? Aristotle and the Peripatetic philosophy have added another element ; and elements, thus added to elements, have

successively enriched the treasury of history. History is a game in which all are losers, except humanity ; which gains by all, — by the discomfiture of one, as by the victory of another. Revolutions may well succeed revolutions ; for humanity governs them all. In fact, humanity is superior to all its epochs. Every epoch aspires to make itself equivalent to humanity ; it endeavors to measure its duration, to fill it, and to give a complete idea of humanity ; every system of philosophy aspires to a complete representation of reason ; therefore, each of these is good, in its time and in its place ; and it is also good that each of them should, in its turn, succeed and displace its predecessor. Thus also, in general history, every thing succeeds and destroys some other thing ; every thing develops itself, and every thing tends to accomplish the end and aim of history.

What is the end and aim of history ? What is the end and aim of humanity and of life ? Shall we be content, gentlemen, to repeat the ordinary commonplace of indefinite perfectibility ? But what is indefinite perfectibility ? We may form some conception of what is meant by advancing the perfection of a being, when once the type of its perfection has been determined and defined. For, when the type of its perfection has been defined, we know the aim towards which, in advancing its perfection, our endeavors must tend ; and a plan

for that purpose may, in conformity with given laws, be adopted, of which the regular and measurable progress, as well as its point of departure, may be determined. But, when the aim is indefinite, who can determine the course to be pursued ? And, how can he promote the advancement of perfection, who knows not in what perfection is to consist ? It is absolutely necessary, either, to determine positively in what perfection is to consist, or, to cease to speak of a perfectibility, without end or aim, without any possible measure, and, therefore, utterly unintelligible. This is the consequence of understanding, by indefinite, that which is not definite or not definable ; but is it possible to understand this term differently ? Are we to understand, that we are to promote the advancement of humanity in an infinite series of perfectibility. We are unwilling to believe so ; but, it is nevertheless a conclusion forced upon us by the declamations current on this subject. This is no fiction, gentlemen ; yes, it has been said, that perfectibility is indefinite, that is, unlimited : and, as physical life itself, with its given bounds, presented an objection, which threatened to beat down this hypothesis at a single blow ; the chimera of perfectibility has been pushed to the extreme of assuring us — I feel repugnant at repeating it, — that the physical life of man might not only be extended more or less, but, that the progress of natural science and of a wise

philosophy might prolong it almost indefinitely ; so that we might arrive almost at immortality in this world. This is too much to be hoped for. Yes, man is perfectible ; but in a very different sense of the word. Humanity has an aim ; and, consequently, from the point of its departure, it advances towards it unceasingly and regularly ; it advances towards perfection. But, this advancement proceeds from the superior aim towards which it tends ; and in every given epoch, and in the whole of history, you behold its perfectibility ; — no other exists. We are not to imagine that man will, in process of time, assume a different nature ; or that this nature will acquire new elements, which new laws will govern. Man changes much, but he changes not fundamentally : man is given ; his nature, his intelligence, and his physical constitution, with its necessary bounds, are given. The developement of his intelligence is not infinite, it is finite ; it is measurable by the nature and the reach of that intelligence itself.\* We have seen, that not more than three ideas are given, in human intelligence. Reflection, applying itself to human consciousness, may fix its attention upon it for myriads of centuries, and I defy it to discover there any thing whatsoever, but what is given there ; namely, these three ideas differently combined. And these combinations are not inexhaustible.

\* See Note F.



When once all the terms, neither more nor less, of a combination are given, you may calculate all its modes. If reflection cannot add a single element to consciousness ; then, neither can history add a single fundamental element to human nature. It develops them, and it does nothing more. Herein solely consists its power, and this is its only aim. The aim of history and of humanity, can be no other than to manifest the movements of thought ; which, constantly aspiring to know itself completely, and being unable to know itself completely without having exhausted all incomplete views of itself, tends, from incomplete view to incomplete view, by a measurable progress, to arrive at a complete view of itself and of all its substantial elements, successively disengaged, and elucidated by their contrasts, by their momentary reconciliations, and the renewals of their wars. Such is the general aim of humanity and of history. This end, this type of perfection once determined, the movement of humanity and of history towards its attainment, is determinable ; its progressive advances towards perfection are certain ; but that perfection is definable, it is finite ; its measure and its limit is human nature, — the very nature of thought. I repeat ; if individuals were each of them to endure six centuries, and if humanity were to endure millions of years, neither humanity nor individuals could give to themselves a single new element of

their existence. Individuals will be born, and if they are born, they will die ; — whatever Condorcet may say. If reason commence to perceive some particular idea, it will exhaust it, and cease to consider it. If some particular people accomplish the idea which it was called to realize ; after having realized that idea, it will pass away. The system of empiricism and sensualism may be vastly extensive, yet it suffices not for thought ; it was, one day, born ; and, in like manner as many other systems, it will pass away ; nay, in spite of the immortality promised to it, it has already passed away, or it is, at least, much obscured ; and, it is upon this condition, that the circuit of history, which is that of thought, is accomplished. Once more ; — this circuit is given. In fact, let us ask, of how many elements does thought consist ? You have already seen, that there are but three ; namely, the finite and the infinite, and their relations. It, therefore, appears to me impossible, that there should exist, in the developement of human thought, more than three great elements, more than three great characters, more than three principal points of view ; and by consequence, there cannot exist more than three great epochs. I do not now place these three epochs in any determinate order ; I only enumerate them, without choosing their position. There must necessarily exist an epoch, in which the human race will be principally occupied with some

particular idea, for instance, the idea of the finite ; and it will then give to all its creations and to all its conceptions, this character exclusively ; or, at some other epoch, it will be struck exclusively with the character of the infinite ; it will then give to every thing this character alone ; or finally, after having become acquainted with and exhausted the investigation of the particulars contained in both of these, that is, after having perceived their truth and their error, taken collectively, men will endeavor, the two terms being given, to discover their true relation to each other. There can exist only three epochs ; each, may be more or less comprehensive ; but there cannot exist more than three.

It will now be requisite to establish this fact well, and also to determine the order in which these three epochs succeed each other. This will be the subject of my next lecture.

## LECTURE VII.

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### CONTENTS.

Recapitulation of what has been said of spontaneity and reflection, in the individual and in the human species. Reflection, — the element of error. History; its epochs. Three epochs, neither more nor less. The order of these three epochs; the order of their succession; the order of their generation. Of the plan of history, as the manifestation of the plan of providence. Historical optimism.

GENTLEMEN, —

**THE** instinct of reason reveals to humanity all essential truths, at once, and by consequence, confusedly. It is reflection which, in breaking this unity, dissipates the clouds which envelope its different elements, and whilst it distinguishes, elucidates them. To distinguish is to consider separately; and the office of reflection is to consider, one by one, all the elements of the primitive unity, given by the spontaneity of reason. The ultimate aim of reflection, in considering each of its elements separately, is to elucidate them; and thus to arrive, by a successive decomposition and examination of each of them, to the composition of a new unity, in which all the primitive elements shall again be

discoverable, surrounded with that bright illumination which reflection confers, and which is the result of a special, distinct, and profound examination of each of its component elements. Reason commences with a synthesis, rich and prolific, but obscure; then comes analysis, which elucidates all by dividing every thing, and which again resolves itself into the production of a superior synthesis, equally comprehensive, but more luminous than the first. Spontaneity gives truth, reflection produces science; one furnishes a broad and solid basis for the developements of humanity; the other impresses upon these developements their veritable form.

The aim of reflection, gentlemen, is great and excellent; we must therefore consent to follow the only road that leads to it; namely, the decomposition and the special examination of all the primitive elements. But the special examination of a particular element requires that we should neglect, forget, and be ignorant of all the rest. When reflection, therefore, examines by itself one of the elements given in the primitive synthesis, it knows not, it cannot know, that any other exists; for how should it know it? It would know it, if it were arrived at the last result and ultimate aim of reflection; that is, at the recomposition of the whole; but this is the end of reflection, not its point of departure. It would know it, if it held in distinct

and firm remembrance, the primitive unity ; but this is impossible ; for distinct and firm remembrance is given only in consequence of reflection. When reflection enters upon its functions, it knows not that before its commencement, another operation had already taken place, by which many elements were given ; it knows not that in process of time, its successive applications will terminate in a new unity ; it commences by itself, and by the operation which properly belongs to it ; it supposes nothing on the one hand, and it foresees nothing on the other. Its function is to distinguish, in order to elucidate ; it distinguishes, it separates, it takes each element, one by one : when it takes one, it holds no other ; it is ignorant of its existence ; it is therefore doomed to consider that which for the present moment passes under its eye, as the sole and only element of thought ; it knows not, it cannot know, of any other. Hence, gentlemen, not only, (as I said in my last lecture) the possibility but the necessity of error. What is error ? It is one of the elements of thought, considered exclusively, and mistaken for the whole of thought. Error is nothing but incomplete truth, converted into absolute truth. No other error is possible. In fact, thought is unable to deceive itself ; it is impossible for consciousness to exist, without possessing some one of the elements which constitute it ; for without some such element, every element

of reality being wanting, every phenomenon of consciousness, even a consciousness of the most idle thought, would be impossible. We are therefore always in the possession of some truth; and almost always, when we reflect, we think something that is false; for we think of something that is incomplete; and although in every thing that is incomplete, there necessarily exists something that is true, yet that truth is already combined with something erroneous. From the necessity of error proceed the inevitable differences perceptible in the opinions of different men, and in the mind of one and the same individual at different times. Primitive unity, supposing no distinctions, admits neither of error nor of difference; but reflection, dividing the elements of thought one from the other, and considering each of them exclusively, must necessarily lead to error; and as it sometimes considers one, and sometimes another of these elements, it must lead to a diversity of errors, and consequently to those differences which occur in the perceptions of one and the same individual. Thus man, who in the main point, and in the spontaneous emanation of his intelligence, is identically the same with himself, does not, in reflection, resemble himself perfectly, at any two moments in the whole course of his existence. Hence the different epochs of individual existence. When we bend our thought inwardly, we may be struck with

one or with some other particular element of our thought ; and, all of them being true, any one of them may, equally as any other, prepossess our mind, and we may give ourselves entirely up to this exclusive view, that is, to this error, precisely by placing confidence in the truth which is within it. Man does not give himself up to any thing but truth ; and every error must assume the form of truth, in order to be admitted. Because a certain element is real, we consider it separately, and we abandon ourselves to its exclusive consideration ; but, though that element be real, yet being only some particular element, it is not adequate to the whole capacity of reflection, it does not fully occupy its space, nor does it fill it constantly : this exclusive consideration may therefore be followed by another, and this again by yet another ; and thus the intellectual life of man, and its continual metamorphosis, flows on successively. The accidents, gentlemen, that measure out our life, and divide it between them, are not external ; they are internal accidents, — events of thought. He, whose point of view were never to change, who should always be governed by one and the same idea alone, would have but one epoch, throughout the whole of his life, how great soever the age which he might attain, and how changeable and diverse soever might be his adventures and his situations in this world. It may even be said that no accident whatsoever



would occur to him; for, as no accident would modify his thought, they would, all of them, assume one color, one uniform character. That which produces an epoch in life, is a change in our ideas; it is that which truly divides our existence, and makes it different from itself. The necessary succession of the different points of view in his reflection, is that which constitutes the real differences of man, in comparison with himself. It is the same, in respect to men compared with other men. As it is impossible that all men should, as it were by mutual agreement, be influenced by the same element of thought at the same time; it follows that, at one and the same time, men necessarily differ from each other; that they do not, and cannot understand each other; and that they therefore may consider each other reciprocally as senseless and unreasonable beings. He, for instance, of whose mind the idea of unity and of the infinite has taken entire possession, may regard with compassion the man to whom this finite and bounded world can give pleasure, — to whom human life, in its variety, is agreeable and dear; while, on the other hand, the man who is well pleased with this world, and with the movements produced by the business and the interests of this life, may regard as a madman him who unceasingly thinks of and elevates himself towards the invisible principle of existence. Men are scarcely ever more than

halves and quarters of men ; who, unable to understand, accuse each other. I hope that those youths, who for some time will frequent this lecture room, will there contract different habits ; that they will learn to understand, that, as every error contains some truth, therefore every error should be treated with profound indulgence ; and, that all those halves of men that we constantly meet with around us, are, nevertheless fragments of humanity, and that in them, we should still respect that truth and that humanity of which they participate. And, do you know the means gentlemen, by which you may arrive at this tolerance, or rather, at this universal sympathy ? You can arrive at it on one condition only ; and that is, that you yourselves get rid of every exclusive prepossession ; that you embrace all the elements of thought, and thus reconstruct the whole edifice of humanity in your own minds. When that is done, then whosoever of your fellow creatures may present himself to you, and whatever may be the exclusive idea that prepossesses him, whether it be that of unity and the infinite, or that of the finite and of variety, you will sympathize with him ; for the idea that subdues him, will not be wanting to you ; you will, therefore, in him, pardon humanity ; for you will comprehend it ; and you will comprehend it, because you will possess it entirely. This is the only remedy against the malady of fanaticism ; which, whatever be its ob-

ject, proceeds from nothing but the prepossession of the mind by one object exclusively, whilst we are ignorant of, and despise every other.

Gentlemen: the case with humankind is the same as with human individuals. One primitive revelation illumines the cradle of human civilization. All ancient traditions ascend to an age when man, going forth from the hands of God, received from him, immediately, every light and every truth; but these were soon obscured and corrupted by time, and by the incomplete science of man. This golden age is that Eden which poetry and religion place at the commencement of history; — a vivid and a sacred emblem of the spontaneous development of reason in its native energy, preparatory to its reflective developement.

What reflection is to the individual, history is to the human race. History develops all the essential elements of humanity; and it develops them by means of time. Now, the condition of time, as we have already seen, is succession; and succession implies, that, at the moment when one element is developing itself, the others are not yet developed, or do not develop themselves any longer. Hence the necessity of different epochs in the existence of the human race. An epoch is nothing else than the separate developement of one of the elements of humanity, which, — for a space of time more or less considerable, — is destined to

occupy the stage of history, with an injunction to act the part assigned to it, to display all the powers which it possesses, and not to retire, before it has delivered over to history all that was contained within its bosom. Thus, all the epochs of humanity differ necessarily from each other; because every epoch is but the predominance of some particular element of humanity. History is diverse because it is successive; and in history diversity appears as contradiction, conflict, and war; for an epoch does not, of its own accord, retire voluntarily from the scene, but is compelled with fire and sword, to give room to the new epoch which is to succeed it. The end of such revolutions is to effect the complete developement of civilization, that is to say, the complete developement of humanity; and there, gentlemen, you see at once their necessity and their vindication. All the epochs of history, how diverse soever, conspire to the same end. Though incomplete, when considered in itself, every epoch, added to that which precedes and to that which follows it, has its share in the complete and finished representation of human nature.

Now, if an epoch is nothing else than the predominance of one of the elements of humanity during the time which is requisite in order to complete its whole developement, there must necessarily exist more than one epoch, because humanity consists of more than one element. We must

therefore endeavor to ascertain how many epochs actually exist. It is evident that there must exist as many epochs as there are elements; and as there exist only three elements, it follows that only three great epochs can be given. History develops humanity, and in humanity it can develop nothing but the elements of which humanity consists. And consequently it must take, in succession, the different ideas which are the foundation, the law, and the rule of the human mind. For instance, the idea of the finite is a necessary element of thought; this element must therefore receive its complete historical developement; that is to say, a special epoch must be exclusively devoted to the predominance of the idea of the finite. For, supposing that it should be developed at the same time with the idea of the infinite, the developement of the one would interfere with that of the other; and we should never arrive at a full knowledge of what is contained, neither more nor less, in the idea of the finite. Hence the necessary existence of a particular epoch, when humanity, so to speak, casts all her conceptions into moulds given by the idea of the finite, and when that idea penetrates and pervades all those spheres of existence which manifest the life of every epoch, every people, and every individual; — when it determines the character of their industry, politics, art, religion, and philosophy. An epoch is completed when it has

caused the idea which is given to it to be developed to pass through all these spheres. Thus the epoch destined to represent in history the idea of the finite, will impress that idea on industry, on the state, on art, on religion, and on philosophy ; and in the identity of this idea will consist the identity of that epoch ; for this idea will be reflected by all the spheres of which that epoch is composed. An epoch is *one*, because it has but one part to perform ; and it has but one part to perform, because it is necessarily the exclusive representation of one sole element of thought. This is the reason why all that belongs to a given epoch, when once the character of that epoch has been sufficiently ascertained, may be determined beforehand. Be assured, then, that when once, in the course of humanity, the moment has arrived for the idea of the finite to make its appearance, it will be displayed, together with the whole retinue of its concomitant ideas, such as the idea of movement, variety, &c. which all of them, only present the same idea, viz. that of the finite, in different points of view ; and the character of this idea will infuse itself into all the transactions of that epoch. At such a time, industry will not be immovable and stationary, but progressive. Men will not be satisfied with receiving from nature what it spontaneously offers ; fishery and pastoral life will not suffice ; they will spare no labor to subdue the soil and to wring from it the greatest

possible amount of its productions ; and again, they will not rest until they compel these productions to assume the form, most expressive of the idea of that epoch. Commerce will be developed upon an extensive scale ; and all the nations who, in that epoch, will act a distinguished part, will be more or less commercial. And as the greatest bond of commerce is the sea, — that empire of the finite, of variety, and of movement, — this epoch will be highly distinguished by maritime enterprise. Expect not that then, the state will be immovable ; that laws and governments will press heavily on individuals with the weight of absolute unity ; or that social life will submit to the yoke of despotic uniformity. Far from it ; variety and movement will pass even into the laws ; individual activity will possess its rights ; it will be the age of liberty and of democracy. It will, equally, be the age of art ; art will possess the character, rather of the beautiful than of the sublime ; nothing will be colossal, nothing gigantic ; like the state and like industry, it will be progressive and motive ; and, like the state and like industry, it will hold variety in high estimation, and will love movement and measure. Of all the objects of imitation, that which it will reproduce most frequently will be man, and the figure of man ; that is, the truest image of the finite, of movement, and of measure. Religion will not, then, be the religion of being in

itself, of an invisible and inaccessible God; it will be a religion that transfers earth into heaven, that will divest the divinity of its majestic unity, that will divide and infuse its idea into the most diverse systems of religion. Hence polytheism, or the predominance of variety and of the finite in religious representations. In vain does philosophy, in its abstractions, assume the air of being a stranger to its time, and to the ideas which govern it; it only reflects, in a more precise and more luminous manner, the character of the industry, the art, the civil institutions, and the religion of every epoch; like all the rest, it belongs to its time; and, in an epoch of the world in which the idea of the finite shall be predominant, be assured, that the reigning philosophy will be physics and psychology, the study of nature, and above all, that of man, who will consider himself as the centre and the measure of all things. This is the manner in which an epoch developes and organizes itself; one thought, only, is given to it to be developed, and that thought is developed, only by passing through the different necessary spheres of an epoch. An epoch must, necessarily, bring its industry, its legislation, its arts, its religion, and its philosophy, all, under the dominion of one common idea. When this idea has passed through all these different spheres, its epoch is complete and finished; nothing more remains for it to accomplish, and it



gives room to another. If the epoch which in history is to represent the idea of the infinite be come, it will present a spectacle the very reverse of the former. Then, every thing being brought into subjection to the idea of the infinite, of unity, of being in itself, and of the absolute, — all will be more or less motionless. Industry will be feeble and confined; commerce will be limited to the inevitable relations of men to each other who inhabit the same country; they will exact little from the soil of that country; and whilst they are able to draw from it their necessary supplies, expect not that they will work any remarkable change in its appearance; they will not incur the risk of making any alterations in what God has made; or at least those alterations will be very insignificant. There will be little interior commerce, and little or no maritime commerce; the sea will act a very insignificant part in the history of that epoch; for the sea (and especially inland seas and rivers) is the symbol of movement. The nations whose existence will comprise that epoch will be strongly attached to their native soil; they will not go beyond it; and if they do, they will rush forth like a torrent, without fertilizing or keeping possession of the countries which, for a short time, they will overspread. If, during this epoch, any of the sciences should obtain some little developement, they will be mathematical and astronomical sci-

ences; which, more than others, recall to the mind of man the ideal, the abstract, and the infinite. It will not be this epoch which will discover and cultivate successfully experimental philosophy, chemistry, and natural sciences. The state will be the reign of absolute, fixed, and unchangeable laws; and, if it recognises, it will scarcely notice individuals. The works of art will be gigantic and void of proportion. They will, in a manner, scorn the representation of every thing finite; they will unceasingly break forth towards the infinite, and endeavor to represent it. But being unable to represent it in any form that is not finite, they will forsake all that is natural in that form, they will, purposely, render it strange and fantastical, in order to deprive it of its proper character, and to compel thought to suffer itself to be carried forward towards something unmeasured and infinite. The religion of this epoch will attach itself to the invisible; it will be the religion of death rather than of life. Life is variegated, motive, diverse, and active; religion will not strive so much to regulate life, as to teach men how to despise it, and to hold it in contempt; life will be exhibited as a shadow, — as a worthless shadow; — as a miserable trial, and scarcely even deserving the name of a trial; religion will consist, almost exclusively, of hypothetical representations of what existed before life began, and of what will exist after it has ceased

to be. Philosophy will be only the contemplation of absolute unity. Finally, gentlemen, as I have shown you that these two elements, viz. the finite and the infinite, do not exist alone in human thought; and that there exists yet another element, namely the relation of the finite to the infinite, and of the infinite to the finite; it is necessary that this element also should in history receive its development, and that some epoch should be assigned to it. You need then only to conceive a mingling of the two first epochs of the finite and of the infinite, in order to discover the character of the industry, of the state, of the art, of the religion, and of the philosophy of this third epoch; all the branches of industry, as well as all the sciences, both natural and mathematical, would then exist; the power of nations would be both territorial and maritime; the preponderating strength of civil governments would be combined with individual liberty, and the finite would exist in harmonious relations with the infinite; in religion, the present life would be referred to God, but at the same time, the dogmas of religion would strictly enjoin the observance of moral duties; the present life would be taken into serious consideration, as not only worth possessing, but as having a value beyond all price; and finally, in philosophy, psychology would be mingled with ontology. Such are the different epochs which alone are possible.

As three elements of thought are alone conceivable, we cannot conceive the existence of more or less than three epochs in the developement of thought by history ; we can neither conceive that any other epochs should exist, nor can we conceive that any one of these three should be wanting.

But, understand me fully, gentlemen ; as, within reflection, spontaneity always exists ; and, as in reflection, the three elements of thought subsist, on condition that one of them be predominant ; so, also, in every epoch of the world, the two other elements exist, undoubtedly, but they are subordinate, and they are made to submit to the element which bears sway over them. There exists no epoch, when one idea alone predominates to such a degree that no other element should seem to exist. In all epochs, the finite, the infinite, and the relation of the one of them to the other are present, for life cannot exist without complexity ; but from this common ground, the element of which the hour is come, and which, on account of its contrast with all the other elements, and its superiority to them all, gives its name to that epoch of history — detaches itself, and thereby causes the existence of a special epoch. Thus, once more ; when I speak of an epoch at which the infinite exercises dominion, do not imagine that I mean to assert that the infinite then stands alone without meeting with any opposition ; but at the same time you are to un-

derstand that, when we no longer speak of the primitive unity, there must necessarily exist in a totality of elements one predominant element; and it is this element which impresses its character upon all the rest; and hence it follows that every epoch, how complex soever, is the developement of one principal element, whose influence penetrates and pervades the five spheres into which we have divided every epoch. And, as this element, in developing itself, meets necessarily with other elements which also aspire to act the principal part, it follows that, (in the same manner as the different epochs of humanity succeed each other only by making war upon each other,) the developement of one element in a particular epoch is effected only by the war of that element against all the other elements.

All things are in all things; the three elements are in every epoch; but each of them, to pass through its developement, must have an epoch to itself. If then there are but three elements, there cannot exist more than three epochs. If you try to retrench one of those epochs by admitting but of two great epochs, you destroy the developement of one of the epochs of humanity, and you pass a sentence depriving humanity of its right to develop itself entirely. Try, for instance, to retrench the epoch of the infinite; but, if the infinite is a considerable and real element of thought, is it possible

that it should not occupy a special epoch of history ? Do you think that any thing less than a long epoch of humanity would be required, in order to develop all the momenta of the idea of the infinite, all its degrees, and all its shades ; and to know all that it is, and all that it contains ? For you cannot know all that an element contains, without giving it time to do its work, and to complete its developement. It therefore requires a particular epoch. Let me ask you, whether, without this fundamental aspect of humanity, you can form any adequate conception of it ; and whether you can fully comprehend the history of humankind, without allowing a wide space to the developement of this part of our nature. Does not history, without an entire epoch devoted to the infinite, appear incomplete, crippled and halt ? But, if you retrench the epoch at which the finite should reign, the same absurdity must occur. For, the human race would then never be developed in a state of liberty. The human race would never have an epoch to itself. And, taking another view of this subject, would you neglect the relation of the infinite to the finite, or of the finite to the infinite, and would you not allow to the expression of this relation a special epoch ? You would, then, condemn humanity, for ever to contemplate each of these two terms separately, without ever attempting to refer the one to the other, and to

cause the opposition between them to cease; you would treat humanity worse than you treat yourselves; for each of you attempts to combine these two elements in himself; and are you unwilling to allow humanity to pass through the same combination? You cannot, therefore, retrench any of these great epochs into which we have divided universal history. Nevertheless you may try to add a fourth to them; try it, gentlemen; — but it is not in the power of thought, I do not say to succeed in doing so, but even to make the attempt. Here even the hypothesis is impossible. For with what would you form that hypothesis? With the faculty of making an hypothesis; with the faculty of forming conceptions; — that is, with thought. But the infinite, the finite, and their relation, are precisely those universal modes which are the conditions of thought. You cannot escape from these conditions, from these laws of thought; and therefore, if you transgress them, you cannot conceive any thing. It is therefore impossible to conceive a fourth epoch of humanity; because it is impossible to conceive any thing but in the ratio of the finite, of the infinite, or of the relation of the finite to the infinite. When we wish to go beyond the conditions of thought, we arrive at extravagant conceptions, at veritable monsters; we do not even arrive at them; for, do what you will, I defy you to do any thing else, than to combine the finite and

the infinite in some way or other. You may deceive yourselves more or less strongly; but there exist impossibilities even in the extremes of extravagance, namely, such as set aside the laws of the human mind. The circuit of extravagance is given in the circuit of hypothesis; and the circuit of hypothesis is given in the circuit of thought. But thought is linked to the three ideas which we have designated; to attempt to pass beyond them would be to forsake thought itself; it would be to strive to attempt, what we are not able even to attempt.

Therefore, gentlemen, there do not exist more than three great epochs; there can exist, neither more nor less than three; this demonstration is drawn forth from the very foundation of all demonstration; from the human mind, and from its laws. Is this not sufficient, and would you verify a demonstration of this kind by another? Consult the exterior world. Do you there see any thing but the three elements of which we are treating? Its eminent character is harmony. Harmony supposes unity and variety; and it does not suppose unity and diversity isolated, the one from the other, but melted together; it is itself the relation of variety and of unity. Finally, in God, also, we have recognised these three elements, — a triplicity which developes itself in three essentially identical momenta. Thus, God and nature, eternal reason and its external manifestation, present to us the



same results as the study of humanity. Nay more ; as we have referred humanity to nature, and nature to God ; it follows, that the laws of history are not only the laws of humanity, but those of God himself, — the laws of all things. I therefore hold it as an incontestable point, as well demonstrated as any thing can be, that — as there are but three momenta in God, in nature, and in man, — history, which is the manifestation of man, can have but three momenta, that is, three epochs. It is not in the power, I do not say of thought well conducted, but even of the most lawless imagination, to over-leap these limits, or not to arrive at them.

It has been demonstrated, gentlemen, that history contains three great epochs : we are now to learn in what order these three epochs succeed each other, which is the first and which the last. We cannot apply to facts : for what information can we obtain from facts ? From them, we can learn only their existence ; but neither its reason, nor its necessity. We must, therefore, according to our ordinary method, apply to thought. In order to know how the different epochs succeed each other in history, let us inquire, how the different elements of thought succeed each other in reflection. The history of reflection is an abridgment of the history of humanity ; external history only develops reflection and exhibits it on a grand theatre, but it neither changes its nature nor its order.

The question then is this ; in consciousness, three elements are at first given us, confusedly ; we have seen which they are, viz: the me and the not me, or the finite, the infinite, and their relation. Reflection, in applying itself to them, separates them, in order to elucidate them. Which of these three elements is the first that solicits and prepossesses our reflection ? First, it is impossible that it should be the relation of the finite to the infinite ; for, a relation, to be properly comprehended, supposes that the two terms which it connects have already been properly comprehended ; because, a relation possesses as many characters, shades, and degrees, as the two terms upon which it is founded. It is therefore evident, that reflection does not apply itself to the relation of the finite and the infinite, until it has previously examined these terms themselves ; hence, in history, the epoch reserved for the attempt of uniting the two contrary terms, viz. the finite and the infinite, must necessarily come last. Nothing, therefore, remains, but to know how these two terms, which we are now to arrange in their proper order, succeed each other in history, — that is, whether the finite or the infinite predominates first in reflection.

The finite, as we have seen, is the me and the not me. Now, it is the me which, in consciousness, eminently represents the finite ; and consequently, as we are not now inquiring into the his-

tory of external nature, but into that of human nature, we are not to consider that term of consciousness which refers to that which is without us — to nature, but that term which is the foundation of humanity, namely, the me. The me is in humanity the sole representative of the finite; and the question is thus reduced to the inquiry, whether the me, or the infinite, predominates first in consciousness. Thus proposed, the question is easily answered. What is the me but voluntary and free agency? Now the me, or free agency, stands in need of long exercise, before it can emancipate itself from the not me or the external world, and before it can acquire a strength and confidence in itself, sufficient to produce that illusive persuasion of its own power, which induces the mind to perceive nothing in itself but the me. Certainly, this is not the work of a day; and liberty, which in its nature is progressive, is too feeble, in its beginning, to absorb in itself every other element of existence. Add to this, that reflection is precisely that faculty, which disengages from other ideas, and presents separately to the mind, the idea of liberty and of the me; and, that this can be effected only by the aid of time. Hence, the more reflection develops itself, grows and increases in strength, the more will the sentiment of the me and of liberty acquire firmness and extension. But we are not to suppose, at the first commencement of reflection,

the existence of that which can be the fruit only of a slow and laborious developement. Nascent reflection, in its first acts, (and this is the problem proposed to us) is, as well as liberty and the me, but feeble and ill assured. Reflection enters upon its functions, and the me awakes ; but it is evident, that liberty and reflection are, in their first commencement, unable to lead to exaggerated notions of the importance of the me. It therefore follows that man is not, and cannot be, to human thought, in its primitive state, the principal and exclusive object of its still ill assured and nascent reflection. Let us consider well what is the question proposed to us. It is concerning the object which predominates when reflection is first applied to the facts of consciousness. We must take reflection at its first commencement, in its lowest degree, and in its most feeble state. We are inquiring concerning this state, gentlemen, and not concerning any other ; we must therefore not think of a state of the mind in which reflection is greatly developed. Now, as the state of reflection, accordingly as it is more or less advanced, is the measure of liberty, that is, of the me ; it follows, that we seek that state in which the me is most feeble, and not the state of its highest developement ; and this implies that it must be a state in which liberty, being then extremely feeble, cannot possibly be, to reflection, the first object of its exclusive consideration. Un-

derstand me well, gentlemen ; if liberty did not exist ; if the me were not yet given in consciousness, and did not act there a certain part ; reflection would perceive nothing. But we are not treating of those elements which inevitably subsist in consciousness, in a subordinate and neglected degree, but of that element which there predominates. This, then, being perfectly understood, it is evident that that element cannot be the me ; that me, which, in the highest degree of the developement of reflection, is feeble, bounded, and limited, and which, in the first fact of reflection, appears rather as one of the conditions and spectators of the fact, than as an actor in its performance. Surely it cannot fill the stage alone. At some future day, it may proceed to great lengths in deceiving itself concerning its own importance ; but in its commencement it is very modest. It is indeed forced to be so, poor miserable thing ! The me, therefore, cannot be the element which first predominates in consciousness ; nothing, therefore, remains but the necessity of admitting that it must be the infinite, unity, God.

Here the chances of predominance are very different. First, the infinite, unity, God, as a subject given to perception, is much more fixed and firm in itself. Then, the feebleness of the perception of the finite and bounded me, redoubles the effect of the conception of absolute and necessary

being; even the obscurity, which accompanies the idea of the infinite, adds to its power over the mind. Every other sentiment becomes languid in its presence; and the idea of unity and of absolute being is necessarily the first which overpowers all others, which absorbs all other elements of consciousness, and impresses its character upon the first act of reflection; whilst the mind, awed and subdued by its sublime intuition, perceives nothing besides it, and sees in it every thing else, both the me and the not me, and itself. We ought not to believe that the primitive confusion of spontaneity, is immediately succeeded by a reflection perfectly clear and luminous at its first dawn. The obscurity that hangs over it, is not dissipated for a long time; and the first flash of reflection, showing to man his own weakness and the greatness of God, carries him away from himself; into a state of irresistible prepossession by that infinite, which, he well knows, is no creature of his imagination, and which presents itself to him as *one*, immovable, invariable, and eternal. The me, unable in its weakness to ascribe these majestic and terrific characters to itself, feels itself annihilated in this tremendous intuition; humanity is eclipsed in its own view, in the presence of the being who alone possesses unity, infinity, omnipotence, eternity, and absolute existence. Man, that finite and relative being, feeling himself in the beginning so weak, cannot

consider himself as absolute; nothing therefore remains to him, but to consider as absolute the absolute itself; and he does so. This, gentlemen, is the course of events considered psychologically. We do not commence with a clear conception of the relations between God and man; we must first become acquainted with the two terms, before we become acquainted with their relation; nor do we become well acquainted with one, unless its consideration absorb that of the other. Now man does not commence with taking himself for the God of his consciousness. He commences with an obscure, but powerful and overwhelming conception of God; and under the pressure of this great idea, he scarcely considers himself as a faint reflection, — as a shadow of him who alone exists. Such is the course of events in the consciousness of individuals, and such must be their course in the history of humankind. Humanity, finding itself at first weak and miserable, does not consider itself seriously, and scarcely pays any attention to itself. Scarcely separated from the eternal principle of things, it is not itself, that prepossesses it; it is the principle, on which it still lays hold; it still exists, in respect to itself, as if it did not exist. I therefore maintain, that the first epoch of humanity, must necessarily be that, in which the idea of the infinite, of unity, of the absolute, and of eternity predominates. And, in respect to the human race, it must

be an epoch of immobility. Life, this fugitive life, of which man knows not yet the enjoyment, must appear to him, as a miserable reflex of eternity. Being, and believing himself to be feeble, he produces nothing but what is feeble, bounded, and miserable; and thereby he increases the consciousness of his impotency, and is plunged more deeply into a sensibleness of his misery and weakness. But by degrees, after having lived in this world as in a tomb, as in a prison, he begins, nevertheless, to perceive that this tomb, that this prison, is wide; he begins gradually to move more freely and to learn the use of liberty. In process of time, he becomes sensible of that greatness of soul which is inherent in liberty; and the charms of creation and of life, and the intoxicating consciousness of his power, make him soon forget every thing else. Then arrives necessarily the epoch of personality and of the finite; and you now conceive that this epoch must be the second, and cannot possibly be the first. When these two epochs have lasted their time, the third will arrive, which cannot be a repetition either of that of the infinite or of the finite. Humanity never retraces its steps; but knowing itself in all its force, and in all its weakness, it arrives at a late conception of the necessary connexion between the finite and the infinite. Hence the existence of an epoch which, without being either the first or the second, tends to a combination of both, and infuses



into all things, and marks upon industry, the state, art, religion, and philosophy, the category of the relation of finite to the infinite, and thus gives in history, to this superior category the expression properly belonging to it, and its peculiar epoch.

Such, gentlemen, is the order in which the epochs of humanity succeed each other ; but this order of succession is the covering of another, still more profound. This order of succession, when considered externally, is, so to speak, a mere juxtaposition, and the material mechanism of history. But, I have demonstrated that variety is derived from unity, the finite from the infinite, the phenomenon from the substance ; I have demonstrated that unity, the infinite, substance, being in itself, the absolute, being a cause and indeed an absolute cause, could not but produce variety, the finite, and the relative. So that, unity and the infinite being given, you already possess the finite and variegated in its germ, that is, that finite and that variety, which proceeds from the first cause, and continues to be itself a cause, though a finite and variegated cause, a world full of animation and vigor, and a humanity which is itself a cause, an active and productive power. The relation of an absolute cause to a relative and secondary cause is, therefore, a relation of causes to active powers ; that is, a relation, not of succession, but of production. The case is the same in respect to the epochs of humanity ; they

do not only sustain with each other a relation of invariable succession, but also a relation of generation. The first epoch of humanity may, with propriety, be said to engender the second; for the results of every kind produced by the first, viz. industry, the state, art, religion, and philosophy, become the germs of the second, the basis upon which it operates, and from which it draws forth its own peculiar developement. And the prolific remnants of the two first epochs, when combined together, serve for the cradle and the root of the third. Thus the principles of history are as inflexibly fixed as those of geometry; all its epochs, their number, their order, and their relative development, are written on high in immutable characters; and history is not only a sublime but a living geometry. It is an organized whole, of which the different members, as in actual physiology, are real totalities; of which, each possesses a specific principle of life peculiar to itself, whilst, at the same time, they so thoroughly penetrate and pervade each other, that they all conspire to the unity of one general life. The existence of historical truth consists in the expression of this general life; the truth of history is therefore not a dead truth, a truth which was perceptible to some particular centuries, and which with them has ceased to live; each century engenders it successively; and only time can draw it forth entirely from the harmonious labors of cen-

turies; it is nothing less than the progressive birth of humanity.

Yet what do I assert? History reflects not only the whole movement of humanity; for, as humanity is the summary of the universe, which again is a manifestation of God; it follows that, in its ultimate analysis, we discover in history, a reverberation of the agency of God. The admirable order which reigns there is a reflex of eternal order; and the ultimate principle of the necessity of its laws, is God himself, considered in his relation to the world, and particularly to humanity, as the last end of its existence. Now God's perpetual agency, in respect to the world and to humanity, is providence. Because God, or providence, is within nature, therefore nature manifests those necessary laws which are commonly supposed to constitute fatality; and it is the existence of providence, within humanity and history, which gives to humanity its necessary laws, and to history its necessity. This necessity, which men of low capacities accuse, which they confound with an external and physical fatality which itself has no existence, and by which appellation they designate and disfigure the ordinations of divine wisdom in respect to the world;—this necessity, is the unanswerable demonstration of the intervention of providence in human affairs, and of the moral government of the world.\*

\* See note G.

The great deeds recorded in history, are the decrees of this government, revealed to humanity by its own history, and promulgated by the voice of time. History is the manifestation of God's providential views in respect to humanity; the judgments of history are the judgments of God himself. If humanity has three epochs, it is because providence has decreed their existence. If the epochs of humanity are developed in a certain order, this is still an effect of the laws of providence. Providence has not only permitted, but, (necessity being the proper and essential character of all its manifestations,) it has ordained that humanity should have a regular developement, in order that this developement might itself contain something intellectual and intelligible; because Providence, because God, in his essence, in his eternal agency, and in the fundamental momenta of his existence, is intelligence. If history be the manifestation of God's government, every thing in history is in its place; and if all things are in their proper places, then, every thing there, is good. Hence, gentlemen, that exalted historical optimism, which I glory in professing, and which is nothing else than civilization referred to its first and last principle, to Him who, in creating humanity, caused it to exist, and who has formed every thing by weight and measure for the general good of all things. Either history is an insignificant phantasmagoria,

and consequently a bitter and cruel mockery, or it is rational. If it be rational it has its laws, and these laws are necessary and beneficent; for every law must have these two characters. To maintain the contrary is blasphemy against existence, and against its Author.

I regard historical optimism, namely, the idea of the existence of a regular plan according to which the events of history are governed, as the most elevated idea to which philosophy has yet arrived, and as that which alone constitutes the possibility of a philosophy of history. It is an acquisition of the age we live in; and its importance is of itself sufficient to impress upon that age, the character of superiority, which properly belongs to that which came last. It is sufficient to fill our souls with gratitude to providence, for having caused us to be born at an epoch, when men begin to comprehend, and to be reconciled to the order of existence at every point of its duration; and when, in consequence thereof, they are better able to understand, and more profoundly to revere Him, by whom it is established.

## LECTURE VIII.

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### CONTENTS.

Return to the system of history sketched in our last lecture. Method thence proceeding. Beauty of history thus conceived ; its moral character ; its scientific character. Unjust contempt of history expressed by philosophers. Refutation of Malebranche. Rules of history. Fundamental rule ; nothing is significant ; every thing has a meaning ; every thing refers to some idea. Application of this rule to physical geography. Every place, considered on an extensive scale, represents an idea, — one of the three ideas to which all ideas must be referred. General question concerning the relation of places to man, and, by consequence, to all that belongs to man. Question concerning climates. Defence and explanation of Montesquieu's opinions. Determination of places and climates which correspond to the three great epochs of history.

GENTLEMEN, —

IN the last lecture, I enumerated and classified all the epochs of history ; I demonstrated that there are but three epochs, neither more nor less ; that these three epochs sustain with each other an invariable order of succession ; and even, that this order of succession is the covering of a more profound and more intimate relation subsisting between them, namely, the relation of generation ; so that the entire history of humanity resolves itself into one great movement, composed of three momenta,

which not only succeed but engender each other. Such is the system of history ; and this system has not been borrowed from visionary views and chimerical combinations, but from the very principle and only possible measure of history ; namely, from humanity. The method which I have followed is, in its ultimate analysis, no other than the method of observation and induction.

In fact, you have seen that I have borrowed all my assertions from the consciousness of mankind. In doing so, we maintain a firm footing upon the terra firma of facts ; but of what facts ? Of facts, which, possessing equally with others the advantage of appealing to observation, may boast of the still greater advantage of being encircled with immediate illumination, and of carrying their own evidence along with them ; because, they are but the manifestation of reason within the narrow but luminous sphere of individual consciousness. This is the firm and fixed point from which we started ; and let us now consider what results have been the effects, in respect to history, which have been produced simply by resting upon this basis, and applying, as the only instrument of our operations, the lever of induction. And upon what does induction rest ? You know that, in respect to physical sciences, induction rests upon the supposition of the constancy of the laws of nature. In regard to the external world, you will perceive what

I mean to say, at a single glance. A fact exists, and hence you make an induction; you transfer its existence into futurity; you assert that what has happened to day will happen tomorrow; that the sun which rose to day will tomorrow illuminate the world. And the foundation of this induction is the inevitable supposition of the mind, that the laws of nature are constant to themselves. So, also, the induction which I have made from humanity to history, rests upon one only supposition; viz. that of the constancy of the laws of humanity. If human nature is constant to itself, then that which occurs in its psychological developement, will also occur in its historical developement; — the one is the measure of the other. Now, in consciousness there exist three terms in a certain order. Therefore, *à priori*, there cannot exist more than three terms in history; for its order is the same as that which is perceived to exist in consciousness. Here, gentlemen, is no scholasticism; it is history modeled upon human nature. This is no abstract system, — as some may suppose; it is a system founded upon realities; for it rests upon the very centre of all our real thought. Consciousness is, in respect to us, the most immediate and most certain of realities; and when we transfer it into time, we only follow the principle of all reality, whithersoever it conducts us.

Nothing is more real than the system of history



which I have exposed to your view ; for it is but humanity itself with its incontestable elements faithfully and consistently developed. Nay more ; just as history has been referred to human nature, so humanity itself has been referred to external nature, in the bosom of which it is made visible. We have seen that man is not the effect, of which nature is the cause ; but, between nature and man, there manifestly exists a harmonious relation of general characters and general laws. Yet we could not stop there : having referred humanity to nature, we were compelled to refer both external nature and human nature, together with their general characters and laws, to the common principle from which both nature and man are derived ; and in this principle we could not but recognise the germ, in which, under the form of substantial, though not developed powers, are concealed all the elements which, when at a later period they are manifested in time and space, must constitute the energies and the laws of nature, the energies and the laws of humanity. Thus, gentlemen, the history of our species, the history of that particular, limited, and bounded being whom we call man, — to be thoroughly understood, — must be viewed in its connexion with all that constitutes the immensity of this vast universe, and together with this vast universe it must be referred to the Author of all things. It follows that universal

existence passes altogether and entirely into the historical developement of humanity ; and that this historical developement is, so to speak, pregnant with all that the anterior degrees of existence contain.

Thus history is no anomaly in universal order ; it may be verified in all its degrees by all the degrees of universal existence, in the same manner in which all these degrees may be verified, the one by the other. Are you in doubt respecting the essential characters of divinity ? Look at the world ; for the effect must needs in some degree reflect the cause. Are you doubtful in regard to any of the characters of this world ? Apply to humanity ; for it is absurd to suppose that humanity, making its appearance in the bosom of this world, should not in somewise reflect it. Do you doubt whether the results of your historical investigations are legitimate, do you hesitate to recognise the true order and the regular movement in which the developement of history advances ? Consult at once humanity, nature, and divinity. Prove, with unremitting perseverance, all these degrees of universal order, the one by the other, and every experiment of verification will constantly produce the same result.

You will thus convince yourselves that history, in the succession of its epochs, reproduces the successive movements of universal existence ; and that

it is filled with the harmonious accordance, both of its diverse momenta with its total movement, and of itself with the whole remainder of existence. History conceived thus, in this universal harmony, is eminently beautiful ; — it is a work of admirable poetry, the drama or the epopee of the human race.

Not only is history, when thus conceived, beautiful ; but then, and only then, it is endowed with sublime morality. In fact, gentlemen, if you deny or unnerve the system of history, you deny or unnerve its laws, the necessity or the unalterable nature of its design ; — you break, or you relax the bond that binds history to humanity and to the world, and thereby to God. You do nothing less than deny divine providence. Consider God without reference to the world and to humanity, and God will doubtless still continue to exist in the depths of his essence, invisible, inaccessible, and incomprehensible ; but this is no longer the God of the world and of humanity ; it is no longer a God whose views and whose designs regard the work of his hands ; we no longer see that God, whom, under the name of providence, mankind adore and bless. On what condition does providence exist ? On condition that God, without indeed thus exhausting his existence, passes into the world and into humanity, and by consequence into history ; and that he there deposits something of himself, and establishes wisdom, and justice,

and order; — an order invariable as its author. Providence is a party concerned in the question of the necessity of the laws of history. To deny the one is to stagger the other; it is to overturn or to obscure the moral and divine government of human affairs. If any one then should dare to bestow upon our system the appellations of pantheism and of fatality, and thus indirectly, or rather very directly, accuse us of Atheism, we shall be warranted, in self defence, to throw back, in turn, that amiable accusation upon them who advance it. For the true God is on our side; he is a God related to humanity, a providence; and providence cannot be banished from history; for its designs regard humanity, and they demand the developement of humanity in history. Now, if providence be present in history, it must necessarily manifest itself there according to some certain plan, some fixed plan, that is to say, by necessary laws. The necessity of the laws of history, together with their exalted characteristic attributes of wisdom and of justice, constitutes in history the form of providence.

Thus the system which I have developed is the only moral system, at the same time that it is the only one that is beautiful; I must add that it is the only one that is scientific. In fact that which constitutes science is the suppression of every thing anomalous; it is that which substitutes order for what is arbitrary, reality for appearance, and reason

for sensation and imagination ; — it is that which recalls and raises particular phenomena to a strict accordance with their general laws.

History, then, is moral, beautiful, and scientific ; and considered thus, it presents itself to the philosopher as an object worthy of his study and of his meditation.

Gentlemen, father Malebranche entering one day into the apartment of a young man, who afterwards was well known as the illustrious chancellor D'Aguesseau, found him employed in reading Thucydides ; upon which the kind and gentle Malebranche, getting somewhat in a passion, upbraided his young friend with seeking only to amuse his imagination, and resting like a child in accidental facts, which might or might not have occurred, instead of employing his mind with reflecting upon himself, upon man, upon his destiny, and upon God ; — in short, with philosophic ideas. I no longer remember what D'Aguesseau did ; — I believe he quitted Thucydides for Descartes. Had I been in his place I should, doubtless, willingly have entered upon the study of Descartes ; but I should not have relinquished Thucydides ; and I should have retained him upon the strength of the very system of Malebranche. I should have replied to Malebranche : “ Is it possible that you, a philosopher, can despise history ? You see all things in God ; and with some explanations you are right.

But, if all things are in God, then it seems that God must be in all things; that he must be in this world, and above all in humanity: it seems, therefore, that he must be in all that appertains to humanity, and consequently in its history. If, as you acknowledge, nothing exists but on the condition of its relation to God and to those ideas which manifest him; it follows that there is nothing in history which has not its reason for existing, its idea, its principle, its law: therefore history is eminently philosophical."

I know not what answer Malebranche, in accordance with his own principles, could have made to this. I consider history as the counterproof of philosophy, and as itself a philosophy altogether; and it is from considering it in this point of view that I draw the essential rule of history.

If every thing has its reason for existing, its idea, its principle, its law, then nothing is insignificant; every thing has some meaning: it is this meaning which it is our business to decypher; and to discern this meaning, to disengage it, and to bring it to light, is the task and the office of the philosophic historian. The world of ideas is hidden within the world of facts; facts in themselves, and looked upon only as to their external surface, are insignificant; but impregnated by reason they manifest the idea which they envelope, they become reasonable and intelligible; they are then no longer sim-

ple facts which make impressions upon our senses ; they are ideas which reason comprehends and combines. Undoubtedly men do very well to collect facts as they occur ; but these compose rather the materials of history than history itself. History, properly so called, history, *par excellence*, history, worthy of the name, which originally denotes the science of that which was, is to be found only in the relation of facts to ideas. The first duty of the philosophic historian, therefore, is to ask facts what they signify, what idea they express, what relation they sustain to that epoch of the world, in the bosom of which they make their appearance. To trace every fact back to that general law which alone causes it to exist ; to examine its relation to other facts traced also back to the law of their existence ; and to proceed from one relation to another, until we are enabled to seize upon the relation even of the most fugitive particularity to the most general idea of an epoch ; this is the first and highest rule of history. This rule branches into just as many particular rules as there can exist great manifestations of the general spirit of an epoch. Now what are the conditions upon which the general spirit of an epoch is manifested ? They are three. First, the spirit of an epoch must, in order to be made visible, find room for itself in space, and it must establish itself there and occupy some portion, more or less considera-

ble, of this world; it must possess its locality, the theatre of its action; this condition is implied by the very existence of the drama of history. But upon this theatre some one must appear to perform the piece; this somebody is humanity. Masses are the foundation of humanity; it is with them, in them, and for them, that all is done; they fill the stage of history, but they figure there only in dumb show; the part that they perform is mute, and they leave, so to speak, the expression of word and gesture to some eminent individuals who represent them. In fact nations do not appear in history; their leaders appear alone. And by their leaders I do not mean those who command in appearance; I mean them who command in reality; them whom, in every sphere of action, the people follow because they have confidence in them, and because they consider them as their interpreters, or as their organs, because they are so in fact. Places, nations, great men; — in these we behold the three instruments by which the spirit of an epoch manifests itself necessarily, and without which it could not manifest itself at all; these, therefore, are the three most important points upon which the historian must fix his attention. If every thing, as we have demonstrated, expresses some idea, then places, nations, and individuals are, all of them, but the manifestation of some one of those hidden ideas which the philosophy of history is to disengage and



bring to light. Let us take a cursory view of each of these three points successively.

I shall bluntly commence our researches concerning the first point, by the formula in which they should terminate. I must tell you, gentlemen, that every place, every territory, represents necessarily an idea, and by consequence one of the three ideas to which we have referred all ideas. A place represents either the infinite, or the finite, or the relation of the finite to the infinite; such is the formula, which the philosophy of history imposes upon every place; such is the formula, which I pledge myself to draw forth from the existence of every given place, unless indeed such a place should exist, as if it did not exist; unless its existence should really be insignificant, that is to say, destitute of a reason for existing, and subject neither to necessity nor to any law. Now I know not any thing in the world which has not its reason for existing, its necessity, its law; and every law may be expressed in a philosophic formulæ. Do you startle at philosophic formulæ? And do you know what it is that startles at them? The senses, the imagination, and those shadows of ideas which the associations of the senses and of the imagination engender, and which usurp the appearance of common sense. I am thoroughly imbued with deep respect for good common sense; for good sense is nothing but reason itself, viewed in its lowest degree,

and presenting its most popular aspect ; but I do not confound, with good sense, those fancies, which, the more faithfully they adhere to the imagination and to sensation, are so much the more fallacious. Philosophy is the expression of reason ; not of the senses and of the imagination. These formulæ, so terrifying in their first appearance, are nothing but reason in all its strictness, and by consequence, they are good sense elevated to its highest power. In fact, what I have just been saying to you in a metaphysical formula, you have hundreds of times said to yourselves ; every body says and repeats it ; and the paradoxical formula of science resolves itself, in this instance, into a prejudice of common sense.

In fact, disregard the words ; and consider only the ideas. Who can possibly think that the places, the country that he inhabits, the air that he breathes, the mountains or the rivers that border on the place of his habitation, the climate, the heat, and the cold, and all the impressions thence derived, are so indifferent to him, as not to exert any influence upon him whatsoever ?

This, gentlemen, would, on your part, be rather an extraordinary idealism ; and I conceive that, with all the world, you believe the soul, though distinct from the body, to be not altogether independent of it ; and by consequence, that external nature has an indirect, but very material influence

on man, and consequently upon all things appertaining to man. Do you think, — does any body think, — can any body possibly think, that the mountaineer has, or can have the same habits, the same character, the same ideas, or that he is called to act the same part in the world as the inhabitant of the plain, the borderer, or the islander ? Do you believe, for instance, that the man whom the fires of the torrid zone consume, is called to the same destiny with him who inhabits the icy deserts of Siberia ? Now, what is true in regard to the two extremes of the frozen and the torrid zone, must be equally true in regard to the different regions that separate them, and in regard to all the different degrees of latitude.

Thus far, reason has the advantage of according with prejudice ; an advantage, not always to be expected. Yes, gentlemen, give me the map of any country, its configuration, its climate, its waters, its winds, and the whole of its physical geography ; give me its natural productions, its flora, its zoology, &c., and I pledge myself to tell you, *à priori*, what will be the quality of man in that country, and what part its inhabitants will act in history ; — not accidentally, but necessarily ; not at any particular epoch, but in all ; in short, — what idea he is called to represent. A man, whom none will accuse of having lost himself in metaphysical reveries, but who, joined to a spirit of the most positive

and determined action those extensive views, in which the common herd of thinkers see nothing but the effects of glowing imagination, but which still are nothing less than the rapid and piercing glances of genius ; a man who will act no part in the annals of metaphysics ; — the victor of Arcola and Marengo, in giving an account to posterity of his true or simulated designs regarding Italy, — that Italy which on more accounts than one ~~must~~ have been dear to him, — commences with a description of the Italian soil, from which he draws forth the whole past history of Italy, and the only rational plan that could ever have been traced to promote its grandeur and prosperity. I know few pages of history more beautiful than this. To this authority I shall add that of Montesquieu, that is, of the man who, of all our countrymen, best understood history, and was the first who gave an example of the true historic method. The author of the *Esprit des lois*, after having plainly and profoundly established the truth, that every thing, not excepting God himself, has its reason for existing, its necessity, its law ; hesitates not, to ascribe to climate an immense influence upon the human creation. But Montesquieu was not the man to stop short at this general assertion ; he developed, and applied it in detail. Let me invite those gentlemen who delight in the elegances of intellectual entertainment, and who love philosophy well

enough when it does not weary them, but immediately lay it aside whensoever it enters into any fundamental researches, that is to say, into any researches concerning the relations that connect the most minute particularities with the highest and most general principles; — let me invite those gentlemen, to afford themselves the spectacle of Montesquieu's genius, and to remark how he proceeds; how, the first principle once admitted, Montesquieu follows it into the narrowest windings of its consequences; how, descending from the elevations of the general idea, he applies it to all human institutions, whether political, civil, religious, or military; to the most trifling, as well as to the most important and comprehensive laws. This is the triumph of the philosophic mind. In fact, no vacant spaces separate realities; all things hold and bind each other together. Upon the ruins of the philosophy of sensation, badly combated and imperfectly destroyed, a certain sentimental and pusillanimous spiritualism has commenced, from saloon to saloon, to spread among us, which, though well enough adapted to the minds of children and of women, would be not less fatal to science than materialism itself. I shall combat the one, with the same firmness with which I have combatted the other. Doubtless, gentlemen, the relation of man and of nature is not the relation of the effect to the cause; but it is nevertheless an

intimate and a profound relation, of which the reason is very simple; it is this: man and nature are two great effects which, proceeding from the same cause, bear the same characters; so that it is absolutely necessary, that the laws of nature should be again discoverable in humanity, and that, by consequence, the earth and its inhabitants, man and nature, should harmonize with each other; because both manifest the same unity. It is thus, gentlemen, and only thus, that we are to understand, and that I admit the idea of Montesquieu.

The existence of a particular country being given, the existence of a particular people follows of course. Now, if the existence of such a place demands the existence of such a people and no other, we cannot suppose the same moral developement to exist in local situations very different from each other; I thence conclude, gentlemen, — and perhaps you will think that after having, by way of paradox, arrived at a prejudice of common sense, I now return from common sense to paradox, — I conclude that different places represent different ideas; and by consequence, that if we seek in this vast universe the theatre of the three great epochs into which we have divided the necessary developement of humanity, we shall not be permitted to place these three so dissimilar epochs in the same region, and under the influence of the same climate: this follows necessarily, gentlemen,

unless indeed I were to be told that whatever occurs in the torrid, might also occur in the frozen zone; or that we may conceive such or such a people to be removed to such or such a latitude, and nevertheless assert, that the part which it would act in this new latitude would still be the same. Now let us recollect where we are: we have found three epochs; to wit: the epoch of the infinite, that of the finite, and that of the relation of the infinite and the finite. Where, then, are we to place the first? I mean that epoch of humanity which is to represent the infinite, unity, and immobility. Let us try, gentlemen, whether we can find an appropriate theatre for this epoch of humanity, thus determined.

Let me propose to assign, as its proper theatre, to the epoch of the infinite, such a country as (with your permission) I would call a border country, consisting of the borders of great rivers, the shores of inland seas, sufficiently extensive to excite the spirit of courageous enterprise, yet not so vast as to discourage and to weary out its exertions. An arm of the sea is not (as is generally supposed) so much a barrier between two different communities, as rather a bond which, without confounding them, draws them together. Suppose this border country, extending to a certain distance inland, to form hills and mountains, sufficiently elevated to produce a certain variety in the aspect of the country, without

causing any essential distinction in the characters of its different parts. Here, then, you would see before you extensive coasts, rivers of some importance, an inland sea, and few very high mountains. And now let me ask you, if such can be the country from which you would expect the developement of the epoch of the infinite. Is it possible, that all things should continue motionless on the very theatre of movement? Can humankind remain stationary, in situations in which all nature is active, and unceasingly excites them to action? Is little industry and little commerce to exist in the presence of that sea, and within sight of those opposite shores which seem to invite the inhabitants of each to perpetual exchanges? Is a taste for the gigantic to be formed, where nature on all sides appears to be circumscribed and diversified? and are man and his works to assume the character of absolute unity and of uniformity, where every thing tends to cause division, and to inspire him with the sentiment of variety and of life? Can reason consent to so wild an hypothesis? Let us change the hypothesis: let us now seek a theatre for the epoch of history which is to represent the idea of the finite, and by consequence for the developement of movement, of action, of liberty, and of individuality. I ask you whether you would fix this epoch in a vast continent, encircled by an immense ocean, which, instead of encouraging man to entrust himself to



its waves, repels him; because beyond those abysses he perceives nothing, and hopes for nothing; because there, no vestage appears of man, and because man goes only where he hopes to find his fellow creature; would you fix this epoch in a continent very compact, extremely extended in length and in breadth, and forming a mass in which are few rivers, few lakes, no inland sea; in which (we are making an hypothesis,) there are vast deserts, immense chains of elevated mountains, which separate the different masses of population, and exact from them long years and mighty efforts before they shall be able to reach to each other a hand? Such a country would only produce animals of enormous size. Suppose it, moreover, scorched by the sun; and let me ask you, if you would place there the epoch which should represent in history the finite, the movement, the activity, the individuality, the liberty of humankind. Finally, would you place the epoch of the world which should represent the relation of the finite to the infinite, upon a small island, which did not contain a territory sufficiently extensive in length and in breadth for the abode of unity, duration, and of fixedness; where all must needs be insular, narrow, bounded, and exclusive; and where evidently there would not be sufficient room for the encounter of all opposite extremes, and of all the relations of all these opposite extremes.

Let me ask you if such hypotheses are admissible; whether you can conceive, that a small island should be the seat of a great territorial as well as maritime power; whether it is in border countries that you would place immobility, and upon the plateau of immense mountains the seat of movement? All this is impossible; reason absolutely rejects it. Places, therefore, have also their laws; and when a place bears a specific character, it leads irresistibly to a specific developement of humanity. If therefore there are three epochs, in that relation of succession which has been determined, the epoch of the infinite must have for its theatre, an immense continent of which all the parts are compact, immovable, and indivisible, as unity; and as its extremities must necessarily butt against some sea, they will butt against the ocean; whilst on the other hand, they will be shut up by immense deserts and by mountains almost insurmountable; the epoch of the finite, will on the contrary occupy border countries, the shores of some inland sea; for inland seas, representing the crisis and the fermentation of nature, are the natural centre, the bond, and, as it were, the places of assignation for producing the great movements of civilization and of humanity; finally, be assured that the epoch which shall represent in history the relation of the finite to the infinite, will find its appropriate situation in a continent of considerable extent, sufficiently

yet not too compact; of proportionate length and breadth, and which, though bordering on the ocean, shall nevertheless also contain inland seas, and great rivers traversing it in all directions; so that movement and immobility, duration and time, the finite and the infinite, may all of them find each its place; so that nothing shall remain in a state of frozen unity, and yet nothing shall be dissolved and dissipated; so that all shall endure, whilst, at the same time, all shall be developed; so that extremes of every kind shall there be able to co-exist, together with all their respective harmonious relations.

There are three great epochs of civilization, and consequently there are three different theatres upon which these three epochs make their appearance; and if these three epochs succeed each other as we have shown, it follows that civilization must proceed from one theatre to the other, and make the tour of the world in following the movement indicated by territories and climates, in correspondence with the succession of epochs, such as we have determined it. History opens with the epoch of the infinite and of unity; therefore civilization must have first commenced on a lofty and immense continent, to spread across its plains and arrive at the centre of the movement and of the fermentation of the world; and afterwards, to go forth from this whirlpool of history and of the globe, not indeed

to return to the mountains whence it descended, — for humanity never turns back, — but to march on towards unknown regions; and, rich in the acquisitions of the two elements, which have been gathered on its way, to deposit them finally in another continent, which, by its configuration, its exquisite temperature, by the intermingling of its lands and seas, its mountains and its plains, shall prove propitious to the complete and harmonious development of humanity.

Such, gentlemen, is the necessary march of civilization across the world; the theatre is prepared; we behold the globe, formed for man, and for man only, marvellously arranged, and its parts distributed, to receive him who is called to act upon its scenes so great a part. In the next lecture we shall, upon the scenes thus prepared, follow the progress of nations, and of those great individuals who represent them, and who are commonly called heroes.



## LECTURE IX.

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### CONTENTS.

Subject of this lecture. Of the philosophy of history applied to the study of nations. The question respecting a primitive people discarded. The necessity of seeking, 1st. The idea of a people. 2dly. The developement of that idea. 3dly. Its developement in all the elements which constitute a people, and first in industry, the laws, art, and religion. The necessity of seizing upon all the relations of these elements to each other, viz. in respect to their being anterior or posterior, their superiority or inferiority, and above all, in respect to their harmonious relations in constituting the unity of a people. 4thly. The developement of the idea of a people in its philosophy. Philosophy, in reflecting all the elements of a people, is the ultimate expression of its idea. Nations of an epoch, which are different from each other, considered in regard to their resemblances. That the last expression of an epoch, in its unity, is borrowed from philosophy. Of the differences between the different nations of the same epoch. Idea of war. Its necessity. Its utility. Reasons for the celebrity of great battles. Historical importance of war, of the military regulations of a people, and even of their mode of warfare. Conclusion.

GENTLEMEN, —

In the last lecture I have rapidly indicated to you the general relations which connect climates, places, and the whole of physical geography, with history: our purpose is, to-day, to observe the action of nations, and to determine the general aspects under which nations present themselves,

and in respect to which they ought to be considered by the philosophy of history.

Does there exist but one primitive people, that is, but one race only, and by consequence, but one language, one religion, and one philosophy, which have gone forth from but one centre, and from one sole focus were spread successively over the whole face of the globe ; so that civilization was produced by communication, and that the whole of history is but a tradition ? or has history no other foundation than human nature, that nature which is common to us all, which is every where the same, but every where modified, and which every where develops itself with its harmony and with its differences ? Such is the first question which the philosophy of history meets on its way ; but, in my opinion, this question is more embarrassing than important. In fact, gentlemen, whether different nations and diversified civilization be the consequences of deviations from one common stock, or whether human nature be the only root whence this variety sprang forth, it is at all events certain that this primitive people, or this nature originally common to all, has terminated in different developements, which alone fall under the cognizance of history. In history there is no question concerning human nature in the abstraction of its unity, nor concerning a primitive people without any developement ; for, if this primitive people and this human nature had always

remained in a state of identity, and without development, there would have existed no history at all. Suppose any thing whatsoever to maintain its duration in a state, absolutely and identically the same with itself, and to sustain, neither in comparison with itself nor with other things, any relation of diversity ; and it must appear sufficiently evident, that of such a being, whatsoever it might be, there could exist no history. The element of history, as we have already seen, is the element of difference. Suppose then, if you please, a primitive people, or a nature every where and in all respects identically the same, as the foundation of history ; but you cannot stop there ; it would be necessary for you to proceed to its developements, that is, to differences, before you can arrive at history. Now, if there exist three different epochs of history, it follows that, leaving the question of the common foundation of history and of nations untouched, these three essentially different epochs require the existence of three distinct orders of population. I say three orders of population, not three nations. Why ? Because we have already seen, that if every epoch is one, inasmuch as there is in every epoch one element of human nature which is prevalent beyond the rest, one idea which is dominant beyond all other ideas, which envelopes all and impresses upon them its own character ; yet it is not less true, that by the side of, or



under this predominant idea, there exist other ideas, other elements, which act in the same epochs, other parts, which, though secondary, are real. One idea does not exist solely in any epoch ; for the idea of such an epoch would be a mere abstraction ; all that is real, all that lives, is complex, mingled, diverse, and full of differences. If, then, as we have seen, in every epoch, different ideas must exist, under the domination of one sole idea, there must necessarily exist, in every epoch, many nations, to represent the diverse ideas which constitute the real life of that epoch, and which may be considered as the varieties, or as the important shades, the fundamental modes, of the predominant idea ; for every idea, and every principal shade of an idea, must find its special representation in history.

Thus, three distinct epochs exist in history ; and therefore there must exist three distinct orders of population, composed of nations, of which each must possess those resemblances to each other, which are necessarily implied by the unity of an epoch ; while, at the same time, there must exist among them all those differences to each other, which the different elements of an epoch must sustain, in order to constitute the differences and the real life of that epoch.

That the philosophy of history may fully understand an epoch and the different nations of that epoch, it must first divide them, take each people

separately, examine and interrogate it. Now what are the questions which must be put to each people ? And under how many aspects must each be considered and studied that it may be fully understood ?

Among the different points of view from which philosophy may consider a people, there are, in my opinion, four, which, on account of their importance, demand particular attention ; and which the history of philosophy must go through and fully exhaust, in order to know of a people pretty nearly all that can be known of it. I will rapidly indicate these four points of view.

When a people presents itself to the philosophy of history, the first thing which must necessarily be known, is why that people came into the world, what it is to do there, what aim it pursues, what part it is to act, what is its destiny, what idea it represents. You will please to remark that if a people does not represent any idea, its existence is simply unintelligible ; the events by which it develops itself, having no common aim, have no common measure ; and, if so, they form a perpetual diversity without any unity, that is, without any possibility of being understood. In order to comprehend the different events which occur in the existence of a people, and compose its history, we must be able to bring them into a connexion with some common idea ; and that idea is the one which that people is called to represent upon the theatre of the world.

To ask a given people, for what purpose it has come into the world, what it is destined to accomplish, what idea it represents, is therefore the first rule of the philosophy of history. We now come to the second.

If every people is called to represent an idea, it follows, that the events of which the life of that people is composed, aspire to, and terminate in the complete representation of that idea ; and hence it follows again, that the order of succession in which these events first present themselves, is only the covering of another order, much more profound, and altogether regular, namely, an order of real progress ; it is this progress which we must recognise and follow, on pain of still comprehending very little of the history of a people. Let us suppose, for instance, that you did not know that the Roman people was called to represent upon earth, such or such an idea ; to reach such or such an aim ; and consequently to pursue it, and progressively to approach towards it : then, when you were come to the wars of Sylla and Marius, you would be unable to perceive whether you were still in the beginning, or in the middle, or at the end of the Roman history, by any other means than by looking at the number of some volume and at the number of its pages. An end and aim being given, the history of a people is a perpetual progress. It is this alone, which throws light upon it ; and I must add, that

herein alone consists its interest ; for true interest attaches itself only to the concatenation and development of things, and every development is a progress. And we must not stop at the vague idea of an advancement towards perfection ; for, as we have demonstrated, perfection is the measure of advancement towards perfection, only inasmuch as the type of that perfection has previously been determined. Now, the type of perfection relative to a people, is the idea which that people is to accomplish. Every thing leads us back, to the necessity of searching for the idea of each people, and to the progressive movement of that people towards the accomplishment of that idea.

Now how does a people progressively develop the idea which is entrusted to it ? Gentlemen, that this development may be complete, it is requisite that it should traverse all the elements which constitute a people, without excepting one. And what are the elements which constitute a people ? They are the same in a people as in an individual. An individual is not complete until he has developed in himself, according to the measure of his abilities, the idea of the useful, of the just, of the beautiful, of the holy, and of the true. A people is not complete, until it has made the idea which it is called to represent, so to speak, to pass through its industry, its civil institutions, its art, its religion, and its philosophy : the development of a people

is not complete, until it has exhausted the demands of all these spheres. If, therefore, the philosophy of history would know a people well, it must, — after having determined the idea of that people, and being thoroughly imbued with the principle, that this idea is progressively to be accomplished by that people, — search for, and follow this progressive movement in each of the five elements to which I have just recalled your attention, and first, in industry, in the laws, in art, and in religion.

And the philosophy of history must not rest satisfied with examining these four elements, the one after the other, with interrogating each of them, and asking it what it signifies, and with following its progressive developement; it must, besides all this, compare these different elements with each other, in order to seize upon their relations; for these relations are far from being insignificant. It must judge, whether these elements have no other relation than that of coexistence, or whether such or such an element precedes or follows the other; which predominates, and which is subordinate. It is necessary, above all, to inquire into the relations sustained by the religious and the political elements; whether, for instance, the religious element precedes and predominates over the other elements, which in that case will form groups, and, as it were, be melted around it; or whether it is the political element which first predominates, or which

ends by acquiring an ascendancy over the others.

For the rest, whether these elements coexist with each other, as equally important, or whether one of them predominate over the rest, it is certain that they must all be developed harmoniously, and that, in the different degrees of the existence of a people, they must all present the same character; and this must necessarily be the case, because, in its ultimate analysis, every people is one and the same.

It is by considering a people in these different points of view, which nevertheless intimately sustain each other, that the philosophy of history will avoid those partial and confined views which so often have led it astray. It often happens that the historian, being prepossessed with some peculiar interest, for instance, an interest for whatever is political, considers, in a people, almost exclusively, its political element; or, prepossessed with the idea of religion, he again considers, almost exclusively, its religious element; and in such cases he either neglects all other elements, and thus mutilates history; or, without neglecting, he imposes upon them all the character which he borrows from that element which he considers exclusively; and if he does not mutilate history, he falsifies it. History appears then extremely clear; for I know not any more certain means of clearness than the predominance of a particular idea. The philosophy of

history must embrace the whole, viz. industry, laws, arts, and religion, altogether; hence we may conceive that its last result, that is, the last formula in which the history of a people is to be summed up, and which in that case will no longer reflect the exclusive character of a single particular element, but the characters at once harmonious and various of many, cannot possibly be expressed with that simplicity which is by far more easily attainable in exclusive formulæ. If we consider merely the political aspect of a people, even its most general formula will not be very embarrassing. It is much more difficult to comprehend, and to represent, the fundamental ideas of the religion of a people; and in attempting to do so, we already enter upon a more gloomy path. We follow paths not less obscure, when we would enter into the deep and mysterious significations of monuments of the arts. The history of a people is commonly considered only in respect to its political aspect; as this political aspect is the most superficial, it is also that, in regard to which clearness is most easily attainable; and history exclusively political, presuming on its own clearness, is very apt to accuse the philosophy of history of being unintelligible. In fact, the philosophy of history, — engaged in its vast and profound researches, obliged to combine many elements, of which some are concealed in the more delicate foldings of thought and of history,

and compelled, from the different relations of all, of which many cannot be established without great and persevering exertions, to deduce, by a most laborious process of generalization, a formula sufficiently comprehensive to embrace at once industry, the laws, the arts, and religion, — can neither acquire, nor ought it to pretend to, a popularity incompatible with all true philosophy. And nevertheless, the philosophy of history has not yet encountered that element of the life of a people which is perhaps the most important, but which is incontrovertibly the most difficult to seize upon, and, in appearance, the most obscure, though in reality it is that which contains all veritable light.

Gentlemen, if there should exist in the necessary developement of a people, an element, which possessed the singular property of being particular like all the rest, and at the same time of involving, as the condition of its developement, the form of universality; if this element should also possess the historical character of never preceding, but of always following after all the rest; if besides this, it were certain that this element reflected, and gave us the summary of, all the elements; and still more, if this element, though in appearance involved in deep obscurity, because it is the most elevated of all, and because its views are general and reflective, should nevertheless, and for the very reasons which cause the appearance of its obscurity, be in reality



eminently clear, inasmuch as its clearness possesses the superiority of generalization to particularity, of abstraction to concreteness, of reflection to the instinctive and spontaneous course of thought; if, I say, there should exist such an element, and if the philosophy of history should hitherto have totally neglected it, — let me ask you, what we are to think of what the philosophy of history has hitherto been: that element, gentlemen, is metaphysics.

The thought of man developes itself in various ways; but it does not learn to comprehend itself, until the time comes, when, in regard to every thing that it conceives, it asks itself: Is all this true in itself? Upon what foundation does all this rest? What are the secret principles, that is, the general ideas which all things envelope? Is it possible, to raise all these general conceptions to a still higher degree of generality? For we must not stop, until we arrive at the impassable boundaries of thought; that is to say, at that which is most general; at the highest abstraction, at the highest degree of simplicity; a general idea, an abstract idea, a simple idea, are all synonymous expressions. These questions, gentlemen, are the soul of metaphysics. There, doubtless, all is obscure to the senses, to the imagination, to children, and to women; but there also, all is lucid to reflection, and to him who demands a manly account from himself, of what he thinks. In regard to every subject, so long as we

are not arrived at the elementary ideas of that subject, we have not yet got to the bottom of it, we are as yet ignorant of its last results.

But what is the special occupation of metaphysics ? with what does it employ itself ? Take any book on metaphysics, gentlemen, I do not say, take such or such a book ; but I say, take whichever you please, take Plato or Aristotle, Malebranche or Leibnitz ; nay more, open Cordillac ; surely his depth does not make him incomprehensible. Now, what are the problems of which he treats ? What does he speak of ? What does he say ? That nothing exists, in thought, excepting ideas of sense generalized, that is, particular ideas added to each other, that is, contingent ideas. According to Cordillac all is contingent, variable, finite. Cordillac denies the infinite, unity, substance, &c., and reduces all to the indefinite, to the finite multiplied by itself, to a simple collection of qualities and accidents, &c. I invent nothing, I relate. On the other hand, take idealism ; it admits, with great reluctance, of the contingent, the multiple, and the finite ; and it plunges into the depths of the cause, of the one, of the necessary, of the absolute, of being in itself. This is the field of metaphysics, and this is its language. Remember, gentlemen, it is not I who have created these problems, nor have I invented these denominations. I have received both from the hand of centuries ;

and when the elegant fastidiousness of fine wits, which they conceive to be wise circumspection, brings accusations against these formulæ, they should be brought against philosophy itself; for, from its first origin to the present day, philosophy has never treated of other subjects, nor has it used any other language. From the author of *Nyaia* to Aristotle, from Aristotle to Leibnitz and Kant, the matter and the language of metaphysics have not changed; for the object of metaphysics has remained the same, namely, to reduce thought to its essential elements; and these elements, being always pretty nearly the same, require always pretty nearly the same expressions. The language of metaphysics is given, and we must make up our minds to reject the science, or take its language such as it is.

Consider, gentlemen; you may exclude philosophy from history, and then maintain that, in every given epoch, philosophy is arbitrary and insignificant; that philosophers are idlers, who, as chance may direct, produce from their own reveries, a certain number of systems without any relation to the time in which they live, or to the other elements of civilization. Or, if you will not venture to maintain this assertion, if you allow that philosophy exists in some relation with the epoch which produces it; I would ask you, whether this relation is a relation of simple coincidence, or whether it

is not a relation of superiority, of predominance; I would ask you whether philosophy does not reflect the whole of the civilization contemporaneous with it, in that form which is the most general, the most abstract, the most simple, and by consequence, in reality the most clear. All our preceding lectures terminate in this result. Do you admit it? Then look at the conclusion which just reasoning forces upon you: it is this; that metaphysical formulæ are the ultimate expression of an epoch; and that, when with them we mark the character of an epoch, we do nothing more, than draw forth from the foundation of an epoch, what is there contained; namely, that, which developing itself at first naturally, in the exterior forms of art, of religion, of industry, and of politics, returns to itself, in its generality and in its depth, in a philosophical form. Now, what are the philosophical formulæ? We have seen that they are, the contingent and the necessary, the substance and the cause, the absolute and the relative, being and phenomenon, the infinite and the finite. Hence it follows irresistibly, gentlemen, not from any fiction of the imagination, but from logical necessity, that the philosophic formulæ are the general, and legitimate, and the only legitimate expression of the life of a people. Thus the historian discovers, in consequence of his researches, these very formulæ, which are so terrifying, and which render the study of philosophy.

so disgusting, to be the ultimate conclusions of history; and he meets with them necessarily. Let this be my reply to those good youths, who, in our excellent country, after having prosecuted their studies for a few months, and without understanding, or at least without having studied either metaphysics or history, are in so great a hurry to pronounce their historical and philosophical decrees, and to accuse us of forcing metaphysical formulæ upon history. I know, that the philosophy of history has to encounter many prejudices; for it is but of yesterday; it has come last; it has come in its proper time, as reason comes after imagination. But it is come at last; and nothing can destroy it; and its office is to teach us how to comprehend history, instead of stopping short at its external pageants, at those images, at once brilliant and obscure, which men commonly consider as the sole contents of history.

Such, gentlemen, are the different aspects, in regard to which the philosophy of history must consider a people. Are there any others? Do you know, in the life of a people, any other element besides those which we have enumerated? If such were the case, it would be the duty of the philosophy of history to examine this new element, and to place it in relation, or in contradiction with the other elements. But there are none; no others can exist. Metaphysics is necessarily the highest

developement of the life of a people, its ultimate developement; for what can be given in intellectual life beyond reflection? What can be given in thought, beyond the study of the essential laws and the most simple forms of thought.

Thus then, a people would be well known, examined on all sides, and fully explored in all the depths, and to the whole extent of all its elements. But we have considered this people, only relative to itself; we must now view it, in its relations with other nations included in the same epoch of the world. Every epoch of the world is, as to its fundamental idea, one; and at the same time, it is diverse, in respect to the diverse ideas, which must also act, in it, their respective parts; to represent different ideas, there must exist nations of the same epoch, different from each other. There must necessarily exist differences between them, because they represent diverse ideas. I shall at present take no note of these differences, in order to fix our attention upon the consideration, that there must exist resemblances between them, still greater than their differences; because all are included in only one and the same epoch. As a people is one, so also an epoch is one. The nations which are included in one and the same epoch, in acting different parts, act nevertheless parts analogous to each other. The philosophy of history must seize upon these resemblances. But it must not stop at vague and

general resemblances ; it must penetrate into the depths of all things, and it must search in detail, what are, in these different nations, the corresponding characters of their industry, their laws, their arts, and their religions, and of the philosophic systems prevalent among the different nations of an epoch, in order to seize upon all the essential resemblances of all ; and thus it will be seen, that all these elements harmonize with each other, in all these different nations, because they all meet in one and the same epoch. The results obtained by the fundamental examination of a particular people, will not be altered, nor will they be increased. The more elements there are to be studied in a people, the easier will it be, to disengage the general idea which that people represents ; so, also, the more different organs the idea of an epoch possesses, in the different nations that compose that epoch, the easier will it be to recognise that idea. The idea remains the same, only its developement, its horizon, is more extended ; that is to say, that if the formula to which we were arrived was sufficiently extensive to include the whole of a particular people, the ultimate formula, which is to include all the nations of an epoch, a whole epoch of the world, must be much more general, and more comprehensive. Now, it is the philosophy of a people, which has given to the whole developement of that people, its proper character. Therefore, in an epoch, it is the philoso-

phies of the different nations of that epoch, compared, brought into approximation with each other, and summed up in their resemblances, and raised to one common idea; — it is the philosophical idea which results from this generalization, that becomes the idea of the epoch.

In fact, it is certain (we are not now speaking of a single people,) that, in every epoch, notwithstanding the variety necessary to the real existence of the whole, and notwithstanding a sufficiently great diversity in the schools of philosophy, there exists but one and the same philosophic spirit; for, one and the same spirit pervades the whole of every epoch. Moreover, we have seen that this spirit is always exclusive, particular, and bounded; because, it is doomed to appear and to disappear; for, but one epoch is in the world at the same time, and there must be many; the metaphysical formula of an epoch, because every epoch must appear and disappear, must therefore be exclusive; and, though very general in itself, it will, in relation to the formulæ of other epochs which precede or follow it, be very particular. Hence it follows, that the formula of the philosophy of an epoch will be particular; that is, that it will not be at once the finite, the infinite, and the relation of the finite to the infinite; but that it will be the one, or the other of these three formulæ, to which we have reduced all the ideas which can enter into human intelli-



gence. Here then we see, that these necessary formulæ of thought become the necessary results of an epoch. Now, what is the result of an epoch ? It is nothing less, than the very principle of an epoch, arrived at its complete developement ; and this principle, is an idea, uncertain and vague in its first origin, which, being first obscurely developed in the apparent clearness of the four elements which we have designated, and having returned to itself, in the apparent obscurity of metaphysics, resolves itself into a formula, equivalent to one of the three great formulæ of thought ; into a formula, which alone is sufficiently capacious to comprehend all the other diverse elements, because, in consequence of its very nature, it is alone universal. Would you attempt to impose upon philosophy, upon art, upon the state, and upon industry, the formula of religion ? You cannot do it ; for philosophy, for instance, is in no subordination to religion ; for if it were so, this would imply, that reflection is subordinate to the symbol upon which it reflects, — that which is more general, to that which is less so. Would you attempt to impose, upon a whole epoch, the formula of its political element ? You are still less able to do so ; for all the other elements resist the law ; and above all, philosophy, which comprehends the law, but is not comprehended under it. The only legitimate formula of an epoch, therefore, is its metaphysical formula ; because it alone, is

sufficiently comprehensive, to embrace and to rule over the ultimate formula of the developement of all the other elements.

Gentlemen, we have hitherto only considered the relations of resemblance between the different nations of which an epoch is composed ; in fact, every epoch being one, the different nations which compose it must resemble each other ; but these different nations differ from each other ; and they must, therefore, sustain certain relations of difference with each other. The philosophy of history must examine these differences, must embrace them in their causes and in their effects, and must follow them, to the whole extent of their action.

There are, in an epoch, different nations, because there are, in an epoch, different ideas. Every people represents one idea, and not any other. This idea, general in itself, is particular, in regard to those, represented by the other nations of the same epoch ; it is particular ; it is itself, and not any other ; and by virtue of this title, it excludes every other than itself ; it excludes it, either by not knowing, or by repelling it. In fact, every idea which rules in a people, rules there, as the only idea, which, in respect to that people, represents truth entirely ; and nevertheless, far from representing the whole of truth, it represents it, only on one of its sides, and in an imperfect manner ; in the only manner, in which any thing that is particular,

bounded, and exclusive, can represent universal and absolute truth.

Now, how do these differences between different nations subsist together ? Is it not possible for them to coexist in peace ? No ; for on what condition can one exclusive and incomplete idea, coexist by the side of another idea, equally exclusive and incomplete ? On condition, that it has been recognised, by philosophy, as incomplete and exclusive, and, at the same time, has found acceptance as containing a certain portion of truth. Philosophy discovers all exclusive ideas to be false in some respect, and true in another ; it receives them all, and it combines and reconciles them, in the bosom of a vast system, in which each of them finds its proper place. Thus does a wise philosophy ; and by the aid of centuries, history does the same, in the universal movement, and in the ample system, which it engenders and unrolls successively. But, gentlemen, it is not so with a people ; a people, is neither an eclectic philosopher, nor is it humanity entire ; it is, but a particular people ; it therefore receives as absolute truth that, which being only relative truth, and yet pretending to be absolute truth, is but an error.

Now, the particular ideas of different nations, not being recognised as particular ideas, that is, as exclusive and false ; but being mistaken for true that is, for complete and absolute ideas, aspire, by

consequence, to exclusive dominion, and encounter each other, with pretensions common to all, of being, each of them, the only one that is true, absolutely true, and alone worthy of assuming the sovereignty. There, gentlemen, lies the indestructible root of war. That difference in which philosophy sees only a distinction, becomes, in the hands of time, a hostile principle; and diversities and differences appear, upon the stage of history, as oppositions, contradictions, and conflicts. This is not less true in respect to the interior life of a people, than in respect to the exterior relations of nations to each other. We have distinguished industry, the state, art, religion, and philosophy, from each other, as different elements of the life of a people; we have spoken of the different relations of their coexistence; of the relations of their respective predominance and subordination; and we have described these relations, with the calmness of philosophy. But the men who represent these elements, do not take this view of human affairs; none is willing to be subordinate to others; they are not even satisfied, to coexist with each other in harmony and independence; the elements of human nature have, each of them, a tendency to subdue and to absorb all the rest. Thus industry, entirely occupied as it is with the useful, would reduce all other things to the same standard; the state is constantly encroaching upon, and striving to draw all things into

its own peculiar sphere; religion, the daughter of heaven, cannot consent to abdicate its pretensions to universal empire, and ascribes to itself the right of giving laws to industry, to the state, and to art; which last would, on the other hand, sacrifice every thing to the sentiment of beauty, and to its own particular ends. Philosophy is very peaceable; particularly so in history, — in Diogenes Laertius, and in Brucker. But really, when the state or when religion would reduce her to the condition of a bondswoman, (*ancilla theologiæ*,) she does resist; sometimes she commences the attack, whence conflicts arise, which may, and often have become the occasions of bloodshed. This state of warfare, is the consequence of the essential diversity of the elements of human nature; war, as well as the diversity of these elements, is necessary to life; the combats of parties, within the limits of a given constitution, constitute the political life of a people. The same is the case, in respect to its exterior relations. The conflicts with each other of the nations of an epoch, constitute the life of an epoch; none has passed off without war; none could.

The root of war is inherent in the very nature of the ideas, in which the existence of different nations is founded; for these ideas, being necessarily partial, bounded, and exclusive, are necessarily hostile, aggressive and tyrannical; hence, war is necessary.

Let us now see what are its effects. If war is nothing else than the violent encounter, the concussion of the exclusive ideas of different nations; it follows, that, in this encounter, the most feeble idea must be destroyed by the most forcible; that is, it must be absorbed and assimilated by it; the most forcible idea, in an epoch, is necessarily that which is the most nearly related to the spirit of that epoch. Every people represents an idea; the different nations of the same epoch represent different ideas; the people of an epoch, which represents the idea most nearly related to the general spirit of the epoch, is the people called, in that epoch, to the exercise of dominion. When the idea of a people has served its time, that people disappears; but it does not freely consent to yield its preeminence; some other people must dispute it and wrest it from it; hence war.

The defeat of the people that has served its time, the victory of the people which is to serve its time in turn, and which is called to empire, — these are the certain and incontestable effects of war: war therefore is useful.

Gentlemen, I have not in this place undertaken the apology of war; philosophy is of no party whatsoever; it apologises for nothing, as it accuses nothing; it aspires to comprehend every thing. I make no apology for war; I only explain its nature. You know its root; — it is indestructible. You know its effects; — they are beneficial.

In fact, if in war, ideas encounter each other; and if that idea, in which the interest of futurity is most concerned, necessarily prevails, then it is necessary that it should prevail; and by consequence, it is necessary that there should be war; unless indeed it were desirable to retard the advances of futurity, to stop the progress of civilization, and to keep the human race motionless and stationary. The hypothesis of a state of perpetual peace is the hypothesis of absolute immobility. Take away war, and instead of three epochs there will be but one; for, if there be no destruction of one epoch, and no victory of another, it is evident that the one would never give place to the other, and that there never would exist more than one and the same epoch. The consequences would be still of much higher importance. Not only would there not be three epochs, but even in the given epoch, there would be no progressive advancement; for the existing differences would not be melted together; and every different people, would eternally remain fixed in the brutishness of the exclusive idea which subdues it, and which, — though well enough for a certain time, — if never modified, would constitute the condemnation of that people to perpetual error. Thus, a people is progressive only on the condition of war. It is not I who say so, it is history: war is nothing else than a bloody exchange of ideas, made at the

point of the sword, and at the cannon's mouth ; a battle is nothing but the conflict of error and of truth ; — I say of truth, for in a given epoch, a minor error is truth, in comparison with a greater error, or with any error that has served its time ; victory and conquest, are but the victory of the truth of to-day over the truth of yesterday, which to-day has become an error.

Thus, gentlemen, when two armies meet, a much greater spectacle is given, than that from which philanthropy averts her eyes. She sees only thousands of men ready to cut each other's throats ; which assuredly is a great misfortune. But, in the first place, death is a phenomenon which occurs not only on fields of battle ; and after all, it has been said, that war changes but little the bills of mortality. And then, it is not death, that in itself is deplorable ; it is unjust death, unjustly inflicted and submitted to. That thousands of hearts, which at this very instant are beating, should cease to beat, is a mournful event ; but that one drop of innocent blood should be shed, is no longer an occurrence that merely gives us pain ; it is an evil, — a horrible evil. One innocent being unjustly put to death, should excite a thousand times more keenly, the bitter sorrows of humanity, than armies of heroes who know that they are marching to their death, and who meet it freely in a cause which to them appears just, and is dear



to them. There is no iniquity in great battles ; — there can be none. For in them, neither men nor their passions strive together ; battles are the encounters of their causes, the clash of the opponent spirits of an epoch, of the diverse ideas, which in a given century animate and agitate humanity. It is this which philanthropy sees not, and which has given such importance, such interest, such celebrity to battles. Do you know any thing more renowned than Platæa and Salamis ? Why ? Humanity is very selfish, gentlemen ; — I ask her pardon, or rather I congratulate her on being so ; for in history she alone is concerned ; her cause was decided at Platæa and at Salamis ; and hence the high renown of these two days. I confess that I should not be much disposed to feel greatly moved by the consideration that a certain number of men, gone forth from one country and arrived in another, had been beaten by a very small number of its natives, or had crushed that small number. Suppose all this to have passed in the middle ages, at the same places, and between the same men, and it will appear to us as a matter of little importance. Why so, gentlemen ? It is because at Platæa, neither places nor men were in question, but the cause. We are not to believe that that cause was merely the cause of despotism and of liberty ; this honorable commonplace is but the covering of an idea, incomparably more profound.

It is certain that Alexander subdued the Thebans, and that Thebes passed from liberty to slavery; who cares for it? It was not only liberty, — the liberty of a few thousands of the peasants of Attica, that was in question at Plataea; the magnitude of the cause was incomparably greater; it was the past and the future of the world, its old and its new spirit that met there in mortal arbitrement. Victory rested with the new, and hence has the name of Plataea derived its solemnity. The same is the case with the battle of Arbela; not the family of Darius and the Macedonian dynasty, were there in question; for humanity is little interested in either; but at Arbela, — and it was, gentlemen, perhaps the most important day in the history of the world, — the truth was declared, that the new spirit of the age, could not alone, as had been seen at Marathon and at Plataea, resist the old, but it was fully proved, that the new spirit was stronger than the old, that it was in a condition to return its visits, and to make them somewhat longer. In fact, the results of Arbela endured two centuries. Two hundred years after the battle of Arbela, the traces of Alexander, a Greek civilization, and a government entirely Greek, still remained in Bactriana and Sogdiana, and on the banks of the Indus. A similar consideration attaches a similar interest to the name of Pharsalia. I love, and surely I honor the last

of the Brutuses ; but he represented the ancient spirit, and the new spirit of the age was on the part of Cæsar. The long struggle between the patricians and plebeians, which Niebuhr has, from its first origin, so clearly discerned and so well described, in his Roman history, — that struggle which had endured throughout so many centuries was ended by the battle of Pharsalia. Cæsar's family was Cornelian, — not his spirit ; he was the successor, not of Sylla but of Marius, who again succeeded the Gracchi. The new spirit demanded more ample space, and it won it at Pharsalia. This was not the day of Roman liberty, gentlemen, but it was that of democracy ; for liberty and democracy are terms by no means synonymous ; every democracy, to endure, requires a master to govern it ; on that day, it received the most magnanimous and the most wise of masters in the person of Cæsar. It is the same with all great battles. I cannot now give you a course of lectures upon battles, but take them all, the one after the other ; take Poitiers, take Lepanto, take Lutzen, &c ; all are celebrated, because in all, not men but ideas were in question ; they interest humanity, because humanity comprehends marvellously well, that she is the party principally concerned in fields of battle.

Gentlemen, the chances of war are constantly spoken of, and nothing seems to be in question but

the varying fortune of combats; for my own part, I believe war to be a game in which there is little uncertainty, — a game of which the issue is infallibly certain: it seems that the dice are loaded; for I defy any one to point out a single game lost by humanity. In reality, not a single great battle has taken a turn detrimental to civilization. Civilization may sometimes receive a check, the success of arms may be inconstant, but in the end, the advantage, the gain, and the honor of the campaign, must always remain on her side; nor can it be otherwise. Do you admit that an idea, to which a certain portion of futurity belongs, must needs prevail over an idea in which futurity has no interest; that is, of which the whole power is expended? Do you admit it? And you cannot but admit it. Then it follows, that whensoever the spirit of the past and the spirit of the future encounter each other, the advantage will always remain with the new spirit of the age. We have seen that history has its laws; if history has its laws, then war, which acts so great a part in history, which represents all its great movements, and, so to speak, its crises, must also have its laws, its necessary laws; and if, as I have démonstrated, history, with its great events, is nothing but the judgment of God on humanity; we may say that wars are nothing but the modes of pronouncing that judgment, and that battles are its signal promulgations; defeats

and victories, are therefore the decrees of civilization and of God himself respecting a people, which declare that people to have sunk beneath the present time, to be in opposition with the necessary progress of the world, and consequently to be blotted out from the book of life.

I have proved that war and battles are, first, inevitable, and secondly, beneficial. I have vindicated victory as necessary and useful; I now undertake to vindicate it as just in the strictest sense of the word; I undertake to demonstrate the moral justice of success. In success, nothing is commonly perceived but the triumph of force; and a kind of sentimental sympathy draws us towards the vanquished; I hope I have demonstrated that, — because some one always must be vanquished, and because the vanquished party is always that which ought to be vanquished, — to bring accusations against the victor, and to plead against victory, is to plead against humanity, and to complain of the progress of civilization. We must go farther still; we must prove that the vanquished party deserves to be vanquished; we must prove that the victorious party is the better, the more moral party; and that therefore, it is victorious. If this were not the case, morality and civilization would be in contradiction with each other, which is impossible; for they are only two different aspects, two distinct but harmonious elements of the same idea.

Gentlemen, the government of this world is perfectly just; prosperity and misfortune are distributed as they ought to be; prosperity is awarded only to virtue, misfortune is inflicted only upon vice.\* I speak generally, and saving exceptions, if such there be. Virtue and prosperity, misfortune and vice, all things, necessarily exist in harmony with each other. And what is the principle of this consoling conviction? It is the thought of humanity itself, which cannot but attach the idea of merit and demerit to the idea of just and unjust. In fact, in human thought, the idea of moral evil and moral good is linked to the idea of physical evil and physical good, that is, of prosperity and misfortune. He who has done well, believes and knows that a proportionate reward is due to his merit. The disinterested and dispassionate spectator passes the same judgment. Benedictions are naturally addressed to virtue, and curses follow real or supposed crime. The necessary harmony of prosperity and of virtue, of misfortune and of vice, is a belief of humankind which, in one form or another, breaks forth in their actions and in their words, in their sympathies and in their wrath, in their fears and in their hopes. Now, without making here any classification of virtues, I shall content myself with reminding you, that prudence

\* See note H.

and courage, are two virtues which include very nearly all the rest. Prudence is a virtue, gentlemen, and therefore, among other reasons, it is one of the elements of success; imprudence is a vice, and therefore, in war, it scarcely ever meets with success; courage is a virtue which has a right to the recompense of victory; weakness is a vice, and inasmuch as it is so, it is always punished and beaten. Not only imprudent and cowardly actions, but the thoughts, the desires, and the culpable emotions which we nourish and caress in the interiors of our soul, under the reservation of never suffering them to degenerate into acts, these culpable desires, thoughts, and emotions, inasmuch as they are culpable, meet with their punishment. There is not a vicious action, thought, desire, or sentiment, which is not sooner or later, and almost always immediately, punished in its just measure; and the converse is true of every action, of every thought, of every resolution, of every sentiment, that is virtuous. Every sacrifice bears away its reward, every concession to weakness meets with its punishment. Such is the law; it is of iron and of brass,\* it is necessary and universal, it applies to nations as to individuals. I also profess this maxim, that nations as well as individuals, meet the fate which they deserve. We may, if you will,

\* See the author's *Argument of Gorgias*, in his French translation of Plato, Vol. III.; and his *Fragmens Philosophiques*, page 96.

pity nations ; but we must not accuse their destiny, for it is always their own work. Suppose a generous people which takes a serious interest in its ideas and would be ready to die for them, which, instead of awaiting the day of combat in imprudent and culpable security, foresees impending invasions, and provides against them beforehand by supporting a warlike spirit, by founding great military institutions, by strictly enforcing discipline, and by preferring to frivolous enjoyments the vigorous and manly exercises that steel the character of individuals and of nations ; — such a people, when it appears in the field of battle, would be guiltless of any fault, and therefore all the chances of war would be in its favor. Suppose this people to be opposed to an imprudent or slothful enemy, having, undoubtedly, ideas of its own, but not having them sufficiently at heart to make those sacrifices which their defence or their propagation requires ; brave, but without any well supported military establishments, without soldierlike habits, or with a military organization, strong enough in appearance, but without resolution and energy. Let these two nations meet ; is it not evident that the one, being more moral and better than the other, more provident, more wise, and more courageous, deserves to prevail, and that it will prevail. Look, for instance, at Constantino-ple in the twelfth century ; it was an empire in



possession of a civilization far enough advanced, a people possessing ideas, (and of all others those which are most important, religious ideas,) which took a lively interest in them, which was so passionately fond of them as constantly to frequent public assemblies, to dispute incessantly, and actually to fight about them. This people was well informed, learned, ingenious, and ardent; but, at the same time, it possessed no energy, excepting in the pertinacy of disputation and in the prosecution of domestic broils; it was careless of futurity, destitute of military spirit, of any great institution, of any apprenticeship to war, of manly habits, of moral energy, and of virtue. Therefore it was likely to pass, and it deserved to pass, under the yoke of conquest. Opposed to it were adversaries, whom the lettered men of Byzantium have called Barbarians, but to whom that name does not at all apply; for they also had their ideas, they loved them, and they were ready to die for them; they sought to make conquests in behalf of their ideas, at the price of their blood; and they made them, because they deserved to make them. Constantinople was also soon taken by them. Europe raised a cry of sorrow, honorable to Europe, overwhelming to Constantinople; for the heiress of an immense power, if Constantinople had been worthy of it, she would not only have preserved that power, but increased it; it would have enabled her to con-

quer a barbarous enemy. But instead thereof, Constantinople disputed, argued, subtilized, and fell; she met the fate which she deserved; she was no longer worthy of possessing power, and her power was taken from her. And let it not be said that, in my admiration of conquerors, I deprive their victims of all the interest due to their misfortunes; I do not understand such language. We must choose between a corrupt, vicious, and degraded people, not worthy to exist, because it knows not how to defend its existence, and humanity, which does not and cannot advance but by cutting off its corrupt elements. Since men will speak of victims, then, be it known to them, who is the sacrificer whom they thus accuse; it is not the victor, but him who gives the victory; it is providence. It is time, gentlemen, that the philosophy of history should put down the declamations of mistaken philanthropy, that it should pronounce the amnesty of war, because war is necessary; and that it should study it carefully; for war is action in all its greatness; and action, is that which proves what a people, and what an individual is worth. It is an experiment that lays bare the hidden elements of the soul; the whole soul passes entirely, and with all its energies, into action. Would you know what a man is worth? See him act; he there puts forth all the worth that resides in him; so, also, all the virtue of a people

makes its appearance on the field of battle; it is there, with all that is in it. The philosophy of history must follow it there.

In my opinion the military condition of a people, together with its philosophy, is the ultimate expression of the character of that people; the military condition of a people, together with its philosophy, is therefore that which history ought most narrowly to examine; after having added philosophy to the researches which it has hitherto neglected, history ought, therefore, also to enter upon its records, the military institutions of nations, and their mode of warfare. Give me the military history of a people, and I will pledge myself to recognise in it all the other elements of its history; for all is connected with all; and every thing, as to its principle, resolves itself into thought; and considered as an effect, it resolves itself into action;—into metaphysics, and into war. Thus the organization of armies, and even tactics, are of importance to history. You have all read Thucydides. Look at the manner in which the Athenians and Lacedemonians fought; Athens and Lacedemon are there altogether. Do you recollect the organization of that small Greek army of thirty thousand men, which, under the command of a young man, (for the heroes of history are almost always young men,) advanced into the East, even beyond Bactriana? It was that redoubtable Macedonian

phalanx of which the configuration alone is the symbol of the rapid and powerful expansion of Greek civilization, and it represents all of the impetuosity, celerity, and irresistible ardor, that was characteristic of the spirit of Greece, and of the mind of Alexander. The Macedonian phalanx was organized for rapid conquest, to break through every thing, and to carry all before it. It is made to give effect to an advantageous position, for attack rather than for defence, it is a rush, the momentum of irresistible motion; it possesses little of internal force, of weight and of duration. But look upon the Roman legion; Rome is there altogether. A legion is a great whole, an enormous mass, of which the concussion crushes every thing in its way, without threatening it with being itself dissolved; so compact is it, so vast, and so full of resources within itself. In view of a legion we feel that an irresistible power is before us, and at the same time, a power which will endure, and which, when it has swept away the enemy, will replace him, will occupy the soil, will establish itself, and be rooted in it. The Roman legion is a city, it is an empire, it is a little world which suffices to itself; for it included every thing in its own organization. In a word, the legion was an army, organized not only to subdue, but to keep possession of the world; its character was col-

lectiveness, weight, duration, fixedness; that is, it was the spirit of Rome.

If I were so inclined, gentlemen, I might thus take the military institutions of every great people, and show you the spirit of that people in those institutions. But, without prolonging this discussion, you must now perceive that the philosophy of history cannot but take into consideration the military establishments of a people, the organization of its armies, and even its tactics. Every thing relates to civilization, gentlemen; every thing serves, in its own peculiar manner, to measure and to represent it. The philosophy of history should despise nothing. It should take all the interior elements of a people into consideration, its commerce, industry, art, religion, and the state of its philosophy; and it should endeavor to seize upon the idea which all these elements enclose and develop; it ought then to follow this idea in its external action, in relation to the other contemporaneous ideas which it assaults, and which assault it in turn; that is, in its military operations. Every truly historical nation has an idea to realize; it realizes it first in itself, and after having sufficiently realized it in itself, it, in a manner, exports it by war; it inevitably makes conquests; for while civilization advances, it advances by conquest. Every historical nation is, for a certain time, a conquering nation; finally, after having made its

conquests, after having fully displayed its energies, after having shown and given to the world all that was contained in it, after having acted its part and fulfilled its destiny, it is exhausted, it has served its time, and it is finally conquered in its turn; from that day it quits the scenes of the world, and the philosophy of history abandons it because it has then become useless to humanity.



## LECTURE X.

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### CONTENTS.

Recapitulation of the last lecture. Subject of this. Great men. Their necessity and their proper character. Great men are collective representations of nations, of epochs, of humanity, of nature, and of universal order. History of the great man. He is born and dies at a proper time. His sign is success. Theory of power. Theory of glory. Great men, considered as simple individuals, as to their intentions and personal qualities. The littleness of the greatest men. What are the epochs most favorable to the developement of great men? What are the situations in life most favorable to the developement of great men? Of war, and of philosophy. The conflicts of great men in war and in philosophy. Vindication of the victor.

GENTLEMEN, —

AFTER having proceeded from the consideration of the great epochs of history to that of the places which are their theatre, and of the nations which inhabit them; we shall, to-day, take a view of the eminent individuals, by which nations are represented in history, and who are called great men.

I hope that the last lecture has left a conviction in your minds that a people is not merely a collection, more or less considerable, of individuals accidentally united with each other by the bond of some



preponderating external influence. It must appear evident to you that a people can be considered as truly such only on condition of expressing an idea, which, infusing itself into all the elements which compose the interior life of that people, into its language, its religion, its manners and customs, its arts, its laws, and its philosophy, give to that people a common character, a distinct physiognomy in history. What millions of men have lived, felt, suffered, and acted, in central Asia and Africa, of which history makes no mention, because these masses of population, expressing no idea, neither had nor could have any intelligible meaning, nor, by consequence, possess any historical interest! The historical existence of a people, therefore, consists altogether in its relation to the idea which it represents, that is, in its spirit. This spirit is its substance. Take away from the individuals into which a people is externally divided, the identity of their language, of their manners and customs, their religion, art, literature, and ideas, and you thereby deprive that people of the foundation upon which its life subsists, of that which makes it what it is. The spirit of a people is not a dead substance, it is a principle of developement and of action; it is a force from which a people borrows its own; which moves and sustains it while it endures, and which, when it retires after its developement is completed and exhausted, leaves it a

prey to the first conqueror. It is also this spirit which constitutes the idea of our country. Our country, gentlemen, is not the soil, considered merely as such, nor is it such or such a particular institution; it is the spirit common to all citizens; it is the idea which is expressed in the minds of all, by the soil which they inhabit, by the institutions, the laws, the religion, and the manners and customs, in which they all participate. Patriotism is nothing but the powerful sympathy of all with all, in the same spirit, in the same order of ideas. Take away this unity of spirit and of ideas, and we have done with our country and with patriotism.

Now, if every people, I mean every people in the true sense of the word, every historical people, is necessarily one, by virtue of that oneness of spirit which causes it to exist and to act in accordance with the unity of that idea which the individuals which compose it represent collectively, it follows, that every individual, who is one of that people, participates necessarily in its spirit. An individual who, living at a certain time, and in a given country, should be nothing more than an individual, would be a monster. But there does not, nor can there exist a mere individual; and all men who inhabit the same country, who live at the same time, who speak the same language, who have the same religion, and the same manners and customs, participate all in the same idea and in the same spirit.

Thus all the individuals of which a people is composed, represent the spirit of that people collectively. But how do they represent it? A people is one, as to its spirit; but it is externally composed of a great multitude. Now what is the general character of multiplicity? It is that of diversity, and of qualities that are distinguishable from each other in their degrees as greater or less. With the exception of absolute unity, every thing tends to diversity, to increase or to decrease. It is impossible, that in a given multitude, such as a people, in which, as has been demonstrated, there exists a common type, there should not be given certain individuals, which more or less represent that type. As there are some who represent it less clearly and more confusedly, so also there are some, who represent it more clearly and less confusedly, than others. Thus, a line of demarcation is drawn between individuals of the same people. But as those which form the first division, and, more than others, represent the spirit of their nation, still compose a multitude, and as the degrees of their respective qualities, are therefore still distinguishable as greater or less, it follows, that a new choice must be made of individuals who eminently represent the spirit of their nation. It is impossible that the case should be otherwise. Hence follows, first, the necessary existence of great men, and secondly, their character.

The existence of a great man, is not the creation of arbitrary choice ; he is not a thing that may or may not exist. He is not merely an individual ; for his existence is given by its relation to a general idea, which communicates to him a superior power, at the same time that it gives him the determinate and real form of his individuality. Too much or too little of individuality, are equally destructive to the character of a great man. On the one hand, individuality, in itself, is an element of what is pitiful and little ; for particularity, the contingent, and the finite, tend unceasingly to division, to dissolution, to nothingness. On the other hand, every thing general, attaching itself to what is universal, and to the infinite, tends to unity, and to absolute unity ; it possesses greatness, but it is exposed to the risk of losing itself in chimerical abstractions. The great man, is the harmonious combination of what is particular with what is general ; this combination constitutes the standard value of his greatness, and it involves a twofold condition : first, of representing the general spirit of his nation, because it is in his relation to that general spirit that his greatness consists ; and secondly, of representing the general spirit which confers upon him his greatness, in his own person ; in a real form, that is, in a finite, positive, visible, and determinate form, so that what is general may not suppress what is particular, and that what is

particular may not dissipate and dissolve what is general; that the infinite and the finite may be blended together in that proportion which truly constitutes human greatness.

The same proportion which constitutes true greatness constitutes also real beauty. The objects of nature which involve the character of generality, of universality, and of immensity, as mountains and seas, the boundless firmament of heaven, &c., all these objects possess that kind of beauty which is called the sublime. The character of the sublime is to surpass, or to tend to surpass, the limits of the imagination, and of all determinate representation. There exists, between the sublime, and the limited powers of human imagination, a kind of contradiction. When art represents the sublime alone, it rushes beyond the limits of the finite, and engenders only gigantic productions, such as the pyramids of Egypt, the monuments of Indostan, and the primitive monuments of almost every nation. In the other extreme of civilization and of imagination, only those objects are held in estimation, which have a very determinate character and forms strictly agreed upon; art enters closely into the details and the finite forms of things; and it sinks into the pretty and the low. Whether in practice or in theory, the two extremes, which equally fail in producing the effect of beauty, are prettiness and sublimity. The school of

sensualism, unable to pass beyond the contingent, the particular, the determinate, and the finite, is condemned to the character of prettiness. Idealism, on the contrary, tends unceasingly to what is general, universal, infinite, and sublime. True beauty consists in the mingling of the finite, with the infinite, of what is ideal, with what is sensible; just proportion is true beauty.

The same holds good in morals, with respect to the characters of men. There exist individuals who have, so to speak, only a general character, that of their century and of their country; they are mere echoes of the voice of their time; these are the most numerous, gentlemen; they are, if we may so express ourselves, the anonymous beings of the human species. In the other extreme are the friends of individuality; they are folks, who having once or twice in the course of their lives thought proper to reflect, in order, for a moment at least, to lay hold upon their own individuality in all its poverty, plunge into it, and in a manner rivet themselves to it, so as neither to be able nor willing to get out of it; they reduce every thing to the standard of their own individuality, and are proudly insurgent against every authority. In fact, authority is not always reason; nevertheless, as every authority must contain something that is universal, it is thereby condemned to the necessity of including some little portion of

reason and of common sense. The mania of individuality tends to cut the knot, which binds the individual to common sense by the force of authority. These, gentlemen, are the originals of the human species; they form a class apart, who proclaim themselves as the heroes of independence, and who are nevertheless most commonly men without energy and without character; they are agitated for a short time without doing any thing; and they pass away without leaving their names in the records of history. The first, to give them the name by which they are commonly known, are ordinary men; and their class is numerous, respectable, and useful. They are excellent soldiers of the spirit of a nation; in every great cause they form the army, which finds captains in sufficient abundance; it is with them only that great achievements can be, and are effected: they know how to obey. But as for the rest, unsusceptible of discipline, unworthy to command, and unable to obey, their ultimate aim is, upon the immense scenes of this world, on which they appear but for a moment, to represent—what, gentlemen?—themselves, and nothing more. Neither does any one pay the least attention to them; for humanity has not sufficient time to spare, to attend to individuals who are nothing but individuals. The character of a great man, gentlemen, is equally remote from that of the original, and from that of the ordinary man. He is

the people, and he is himself, both together; he is the identity of generality and individuality, blended together in such proportions, that what is general may not suppress what is individual, whilst, at the same time, his individuality, in giving a real form to what is general, does not destroy it. Thus, in the spirit of his nation and of his time, we behold the stuff that a great man is made of; his greatness is the elevation of that spirit which is common to all, and from which he commands all.

If the spirit of a people resolves itself necessarily into some great representatives, and if, as we have seen, there exist in every people different elements, such as industry, the sciences, the arts, the laws, religion, and philosophy, all these different elements must necessarily have their representatives; and as these elements do not, in a people, remain always in the same state, but are undergoing incessant changes; and as, even while they retain the same character, they are unceasingly developing themselves with a progress of which the degrees constitute the different momenta of the existence of a people; it follows, that all these different momenta must have their respective representatives; and hence it follows peremptorily, that, as a people exists entirely in these different momenta of its developement, and in the different elements of its interior life, and as these different momenta and elements are necessarily represented by some great



men, it follows, I say, that a people exists entirely in its great men. In fact, it is in them, that history contemplates a people. Open the books of history, and you will see there only proper names; nor is it possible that it should be otherwise. For if masses act only for themselves, they do nothing by themselves; they act only by their chiefs, who alone occupy the front of the scenes, and are alone visible to the spectators and to the historian. Historians are very right in attending solely to great men; they should only be careful not to represent them as any thing that are not; they should represent them not as the masters, but as the representatives of those who do not appear; for if this were not the case, the existence of a great man would be an insult to humanity. Under this reservation it is certain, that as every people resolves itself into its great men of all kinds, the history of a people ought to consist, as it does consist, in the history of its great men.

Now, what is a people? A people, as we have seen in the last lecture, is one of the ideas of an epoch. As every epoch includes many ideas, it also includes many nations; now that, which generally speaking, is true of one people, is true of another people; and that which thus is true of one epoch, is true of another, and of all others; therefore the whole of history, not only the history of a particular people, or of a particular epoch, but of

all epochs and of humanity altogether, may be represented by great men. Therefore, give me but the series of the great men, of all the great men that are known, and I will thence produce the whole known history of the human race.

But what is humanity itself? Humanity, as we have seen, is the ultimate result of universal order. Humanity is the summary and the representative of the whole of nature; and nature, as we have also seen, is the manifestation of its author. God could not remain in a state of absolute unity; that absolute unity, that eternal substance, being a creative force, could not but create, could not but produce, and manifest itself, with all its exalted characters, in its productions. Thus, as nature represents God; and as humanity is the summary of nature and of all its laws; and as great men are the summaries of humanity with all its epochs; it follows, with a rigorous accuracy which leaves no point to be contested, that the order of things, or rather the constant and perpetual movement of things, in all its momenta, and in all its degrees, is nothing but the process which gives birth to great men. Commence with absolute unity and go on until you arrive at great men, and you have found, neither more nor less, than the two ends of the chain of existing beings. Beyond great men nothing is to be sought for; for the great man is the most exalted individuality possible, and individuality is

the terminus of every thing, as absolute unity is its point of departure.

Thus all things in the whole world unite in the labor of producing the miraculous existence of a great man. Behold him formed ; he arrives on the scene of history, and what does he do there ? what part does he act, and under what aspect ought the philosophy of history to regard him ?

Gentlemen, a great man, whatever may be the kind of his greatness, whatever the epoch of the world, or the people among which he makes his appearance, comes to represent an idea, such an idea and not any other idea, at the precise time when that idea is worth representing, and neither before it nor after it ; consequently he appears when he ought to appear, and he disappears when nothing is left for him to do ; he is born and he dies in due season. When nothing great is to be done, the existence of a great man is impossible. In fact, what is a great man ? He is the representative of a power not his own ; for all power merely individual is pitiful, and no man yields to another man ; he yields only to the representative of a general power. When, therefore, no such general power exists, or when it exists no longer ; when it fails or falls into decay ; what strength can its representative possess ? Hence also no human power can cause a great man to be born or to die before his hour is come ; it cannot be displayed, it

can neither be advanced nor put back, for he existed only because he had his work to do, and he exists no more only because nothing is left for him to do; and to wish to continue his existence, would be to wish to continue a part which has been acted to the end, and is exhausted. A soldier who had seated himself upon a throne was once told: Sire, the education of your son should be watched over with great attention, he must be educated so that he may replace you. Replace me! answered he, I could not replace myself; I am the child of circumstances. The same man was deeply sensible that the power which animated him was not his own; that it was lent him for a specific purpose, and until a certain hour, the approach of which he could neither hasten nor retard. It is said that he was somewhat given to fatalism. You will remark that all great men have in a greater or less degree been fatalists; the error is in the form, not at the foundation of the thought. They feel that, in fact, they do not exist on their own account; they possess the consciousness of an immense power; and being unable to ascribe the honor of it to themselves, they refer it to a higher power, which uses them as its instruments, in accordance with its own ends. And not only are great men somewhat given to fatalism, they are also given to superstitions peculiar to themselves. Recollect Wallenstein and his astrologer. Hence also it comes to pass that great

men, who in action show decision and an admirable ardor, often hesitate and slumber before they are roused to action; the sentiment of necessity, the evidence of their mission must strike them forcibly; they seem to feel that until then they should act only as individuals, and that their power is not present with them.

Without entering into useless details, the whole history of great men gives this result, that they have been taken by others, and have taken themselves, for the instruments of destiny, for something fatal and irresistible; the peculiar characteristic also, the mark of a great man, is that he succeeds. Whoever does not succeed is of no use to the world, he leaves no great result, and he passes away as if he had never existed. It is necessary that a great man should succeed in whatever constitutes his greatness, that he may do his work: inexhaustible activity, fecundity, richness of results, continual and prodigious success, such are his essential characteristics. Now great men are not only artists, or philosophers, or legislators, or pontiffs; they are also, as we have seen, warriors. A warrior is great, and he is historical, only on condition of his having been very successful, that is, of having gained many battles, that is, of having caused fearful ravages upon earth. Either no warrior ought to be called a great man, or, if he is great, both he himself and all that he has done, must altogether be freed from blame.

The result of great success is power, and great power. When a man has arrived thus far, when he has mounted on high, he may become infatuated; he may think that he is, and must appear to be, far above the common level of mankind; he is surrounded with a court, with flatterers, with slaves. Now this man who appears to be the master of the world, before whom the world bows the knee, this man is but an instrument — of whom, gentlemen? Of divine providence? Yes; ultimately, undoubtedly; but first and immediately, he is the instrument of the ideas which rule his time and his country; of the ideas of his people, and consequently, of all those who compose that people, of the small as well as the great; for all are included in the unity of their nation; so that this great man, at the end of the reckoning, appears to be nothing more than the instrument of those whom he commands, and even of those whom he appears to oppress. This is the secret of power. Never be in haste, gentlemen, to ascribe any thing vile to humanity. Humanity submits not to any force foreign to itself, but to the force with which it sympathizes, and which serves it.

A great man, as such, is not an individual; his good fortune is to represent, better than any other man of his time, the ideas of that time, its interests, and its wants. All the individuals of a people possess also the same general ideas, and feel

the same interests and the same wants ; but without possessing the energy necessary to realize and to satisfy them ; they therefore also represent their time and their people ; but they represent it in a powerless, unfaithful, and obscure manner. But as soon as its true representative shows himself, they immediately recognise in him distinctly, what they had apprehended but confusedly in themselves ; they recognise the spirit of their time, the very spirit that is in themselves ; they consider the great man as their veritable image, as their ideal ; and it is on this account that they adore and that they follow him, that he is their idol and their chief. A great man is fundamentally nothing but a people, which in him has become a man ; and it is on this account that the people sympathize with him, that they have confidence in him, that they feel love and enthusiasm for him, that they devote themselves to him. Behold all the devotion that you can, that you ought to expect from humanity ; it is not capable, it were not good that it should be capable of any other ; it serves him who serves it. The principle that gives power to a great man, is a much better principle than that of adherence to the express consent of humanity, which is often doubtful and faithless ; it is the most interior, spontaneous, and irresistible conviction, that *he* is the people, that *he* is the epoch.

In the last lecture I defended victory, I have

just been defending power, and it now remains for me to defend glory, in order to have proved humanity to be blameless. We seldom attend to the fact, that if any thing is human, it is humanity that makes it so, even by permitting its existence; to imprecate power, (I mean long and lasting power,) is to blaspheme humanity; to bring accusations against glory, is nothing less than to bring accusations against humanity by which it is decreed. What is glory, gentlemen? It is the judgment of humanity upon its members; and humanity is always in the right. In fact, who can cite a single instance of unmerited glory? moreover, *à priori*, it is impossible; for glory is the consequence only of great achievements, of having left great results; great results, gentlemen, great results; all else is naught. Glory should be distinguished well from reputation. As for reputation, whoever desires it may have it. If you covet reputation, you need only ask some tool among your friends to make it for you; join such or such a party; devote yourself to a coterie, and do it some service, and it will praise you. In fact, there are thousands of ways to gain reputation; it is a speculation in trade, just like any other. The distinction between reputation and glory consists in this, that reputation is the judgment of some individuals, whereas glory is the judgment of the greater number, of the majority of the human race. Now, to please a small



number, small things suffice ; but to please great bodies of men, great things are required. In the estimation of masses deeds are every thing ; all else is nothing. Good intentions, good will, morality, the most excellent plans which could not possibly have failed to do much good if it had not been for this or for that, all that does not terminate in some actual fact, humanity accounts for nothing ; it demands great results ; for only great results come under its notice ; now, in regard to the fact of great results, no knavish trickery is possible. The lies of parties and of coteries, the illusions of friendship, have no influence there ; nor is there the least room left, even for discussion. Great results cannot be contested ; and glory, which is their expression, is equally incontestable. The daughter of great and evident facts, she is herself a fact, manifest and clear as the day. Glory is the judgment of humanity, and it is a judgment of dernier resort ; we may appeal from coteries and parties to humanity, but to whom in this world are we to appeal from humanity. Its judgment is infallible. Glory has in no instance been annulled or diminished ; nor is it possible that it should be. Moreover, what are the facts which humanity esteems, and to which it decrees glory ? They are facts of general utility, that is, facts that are of service to her ; the measure of glory is the utility of the facts themselves ; and humanity cannot act

otherwise than she does, without abdicating her authority, and ceasing to borrow from her own nature the principles of her judgments. Glory is the shout of sympathy and of gratitude; it is the debt of humanity to genius; it is the price of services which she acknowledges to have received, and which she repays with that which, in her estimation, is most precious. We ought, therefore, to love glory, because the love of glory consists in loving great achievements, long labors, and effective services of every kind rendered to our country, and to humanity; we should despise reputation, the success of a day, and the petty means that lead to it; we should be doing; we should do much and do it well; we must be, gentlemen, and not merely appear to be; for it is an infallible rule, that whatever appears, without being, soon must disappear; but whatever is, must, by virtue of its nature, sooner or later appear to be. Glory is almost always contemporaneous; but never does there intervene a long interval between a great man's burial and his glory.

A great man, gentlemen, is great, and he is a man; that which makes him great is his relation to what is general, to the spirit of his time and of his people; that which makes him a man is that individuality which is found intimately mingled in him with what is general. But if you separate these two elements from each other, you may,

under the form of what is general, discern his individuality; you may study the man in the great man; and do you know what is the consequence? You may find that the greatest of men appear very little. Every individuality, when detached from what is general, is filled with what is mean and pitiful. When we read attentively the secret memoirs which we possess of some great men, when we follow them into the details of their life and conduct, we are quite astonished to find them not only little, but, I am obliged to say so, even contemptible. Let us first consider the personal intentions of great men. What does a great man accomplish, gentlemen? He accomplishes the designs of a superior power, of which he is the instrument. This is really the case, but of this he knows nothing; he pursues his own particular designs; and while he thinks that he is accomplishing his personal intentions, he accomplishes the designs of a superior power. It is curious to search into history for what were the intentions of such or such a great man; they are almost always found to be of the lowest order. After the lapse of ten years, we feel ashamed of ends so vulgar and so ridiculous as those which the greatest geniuses have pursued, and for the sake of which we would not move a finger. Henry the Fourth wished to make war upon Austria, and to march to Brussels, for a cause sufficiently vulgar. I am not very sure

that Gustavus Adolphus had not the idea of forming a petty principality in Germany. And, for example, let me ask you if any thing can at the present day appear more ridiculous, than the apparent motive which for eighteen years put Europe in commotion, and raised the colossal wars of which we have been witnesses. You have already forgotten it; it was the continental blockade. Here, the spectacle of the wretchedness of individual personality presents itself to our view. But it is only the exterior envelope of ends incomparably greater. These, of which no one thought, were attained, and could not but be attained; the others not only were not, but they could not be accomplished; and after having for a moment made so great a noise in the world, they sink into deep oblivion, and degenerate into uncertain anecdotes, which ordinary history may search for and collect, but which the philosophy of history neglects, as indifferent to humanity. The same is the case in respect to the particular qualities of great men. As they represent the fair side of their time, so they also represent the reverse. In the character of Alexander there are said to have been many base defects, and also in that of Cæsar; but nevertheless, no greater men have ever existed. All great men, narrowly inspected, remind us of the saying: "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step." There are, as I have

already said, two sides in the character of a great man, namely: the side of the great man, and that of the man. The first alone belongs to history; the second should be abandoned to memoirs and to biographies; it is the vulgar aspect of these great ministers of destiny; it is the ridiculous and comic part of the majestic drama of history. The romantic drama takes the whole man altogether; not only that aspect of his character which is general, but also that which is individual: now whenever the reverse of the medal is shown, the most burlesque and comic scenes succeed the most heroic and pathetic, and heighten their effect. Be it so; but history should be a classic drama; it should absorb and melt down all these details into what is general and ideal; and it should adhere solely to the purpose of bringing to light the idea which a great man represents. The philosophy of history does not know individuals who are merely individuals; it omits, it does not notice, the merely individual and biographic aspect of a great man; and it does so upon this simple principle, that therein the man is not seen whom humanity adored and followed; that he was not adored and followed on account of any thing that is seen in that aspect, but in spite of it; but on account of the heroic virtue, and of the general spirit, that shone forth from him. The fundamental rule of the philosophy of history, in regard to great men, is to act as humanity acts;

to judge of them by what they have done, and not by that which they wished to do, and which is of no consequence whatsoever, because they have not done it; to neglect the portraiture of the failings inherent in their individuality, which have died with them; and to attach itself to the great things which they have done, which have been of service to humanity, and which still endure in the memory of men; in short, to search for and to establish, that which constitutes them historic personages, that which gave them power and glory; namely, the idea that they represent, and their intimate relation to the idea of their time and of their people.

We may yet discuss two questions relative to great men; the first is, whether the different epochs of history are equally favorable to the developement of great men. Suppose an epoch of the world in which the predominating idea was neither that of the finite, nor that of the relation of the finite to the infinite, but that of the infinite, of the absolute, of generality in itself; for all these categories of thought must have their special representation in history: it was therefore necessary, on pain of leaving a fundamental vacancy, that this epoch also should have its realization and its epoch; and in fact it has had it. What happened, gentlemen? That which could not fail to happen; namely, that when generality reigned alone, individuality was not in possession of its rights, and that liberty,

with the whole retinue of the qualities which attend upon it, was wanting to humanity ; that the masses of mankind remained in the state of simple masses, without showing sufficient energy to resolve themselves into great men, without knowing themselves, or being known to others : for nations recognise the hidden powers that slumber in them, only in their great representatives ; nor do they appear in history but through the medium of their great men. Now, let me ask, what great man has appeared in the vast countries contained between the country of the Samoides and the gulph of the Ganges ; between the mountains of Persia and the shores of the Chinese sea ? Surely the space is vast, both in length and in breadth. There are there immense masses of population, of a population more or less civilized, who have performed, if not great, yet, if I may so express myself, enormous achievements ; they have had wars, in comparison with which ours are bagatels, wars in which frightful masses have fought with each other ; they possess gigantic monuments of art ; and the highest antiquity is incontestably there. Be it so ; but not one proper name floats upon the surface of time, not one great historical personage appears there of any kind whatsoever. It is answered, that we do not know the great men who have appeared in central Asia and in all the countries of India, because India has no history ; but I ask again, why has India no

history ? It is because, as I have already shown you, when man does not regard his actions seriously, when, in his own sight, he assumes no importance, he takes no note of what he does ; because, what he does scarcely appears to belong to him, because whatever happens, almost seems to happen of its own accord, and in such a manner, that no person can refer to himself either the shame or the glory of any occurrence whatsoever. For when that is the case, man, believing himself to be unworthy of being held in remembrance, leaves the world to the action of the powers of nature, and history to his gods, who fill it alone. Hence the entirely mythological chronology of these ancient countries. The reason why there is no history in India, is precisely the same as the reason why there neither are nor can be any great men there. But descend from the elevated regions, where, in their overwhelming omnipotence, the infinite and the absolute reign alone ; approach to the West ; traverse the desert of the Indus ; arrive in Persia : there the gods give place to man, time succeeds to eternity, the individual commences, and with him commences history ; a history still obscure, but yet a history. Great men appear, heroes, a Cyrus. And even, when we pass the sea of Othman and arrive in Arabia, towards the shores of the Red Sea and the coasts of Egypt ; there also we find somewhat of history, we find great names and great men ;



while in India, and in central Asia we may say that humanity has literally always remained anonymous, indifferent to herself, not believing in her liberty, having none, and leaving no trace of her passage upon the earth. But it is the epoch which should represent in the world the idea of the finite, of movement, of liberty, and of individual activity, in which we behold the epoch preeminently marked for the developement of great men. In fact, when you would search for great men, you recur to Greek and Roman antiquity ; it is that epoch of history which may be justly called the heroic age of humanity. The third epoch, which represents the relation of the finite to the infinite, is not less fertile in great men ; yet they appear less brilliant, that is, less individual, than those of Greece and Rome, but more substantial, and, in a manner, more identified with realities. For the rest, this epoch is but of yesterday, and has as yet but just gone through its periods of barbarism.

I shall give no instances, gentlemen, but go on at once to the second question ; it is, concerning what pursuits are most favorable to the developement of great men. We have seen, that the essential elements of the life of a people and of an individual, are industry, art, the state, religion, and philosophy. The question is, which of these elements possess, in a more or less eminent degree, the properties favorable to the developement of individual

genius. There are two, gentlemen, which, in my opinion, are less favorable to it than others. Let us recollect well what a great man is. He is a general idea concentrated in a strong individuality, so that its generality may appear, without suppressing his individuality. Now the essence of religion consists in causing the thought or the idea of the infinite, of the absolute, of the invisible, of death and of another life, to prevail. In religion, God is every thing and man is nothing; the priest, the prophet, and the pontiff, annihilate themselves in the presence of, and in communing with Him whose oracles they promulgate; their existence consists in their relation to the God whom they announce; they account themselves as nothing, and inasmuch as they are individuals, we also account them as nothing; it is herein that their glory, and even their power in this world consists. Sacerdotal castes destroy individuality; for in them nothing appears but the name of the caste; and the name of the caste is the name of its God. Also, when we examine those faculties of the human mind, which place men in relation with God, namely, faith and enthusiasm, we find that they are those in which there exists most of that which in man is spontaneous, which is least reflective, and in which there is consequently less of individuality than in any other faculties. In fact, we know the names of the gods which mankind have worshipped,

but we know very few of the names of those who have announced them ; or at least, our knowledge of them commences, from the time when political action was mingled with religion. The action of religion has always been the more pure, the more the agency of man has been eliminated from the service of God ; and the purer the religion, the fewer have been the great men who in this line have left their traces in history. On the other hand, the conquests of industry and of commerce, are gained by making small additions to them at a time ; every century, every individual, has a hand in their advancement, but the appearance of a Watt is a rare occurrence. There, every thing is slow, every thing is progressive ; and more is done by the aid of centuries than of individuals. It is in the arts, gentlemen, and in the government of states, that all the power of some privileged individuals reveals itself. Look at the names which great artists and legislators have left in history ; they have known so well how to satisfy and to realize, in their masterpieces and in their laws, the ideas and the tastes of their people and of their time, that they have often given their names to their century ; an incontestable proof of the harmonious sympathy of their century with them, and of their power over their century. Nevertheless, I do not fear to affirm, that the lines of life most congenial to the development of great individualities are war and philosophy.

War is nothing but the exterior action of the spirit of a people; when the spirit of a people has penetrated and pervaded the different elements of which the life of that people is composed, when it has formed and developed them so that little remains to be done in respect to what is internal, it strives to extend its influence beyond the limits of its original individuality, and marches to conquest. It is then, it is in the conquering movement of the spirit of a people, that all the power of its spirit is displayed; it is on the field of battle that it requires faithful and energetic representatives; and such are never wanting. Glory is an unexceptionable witness of the importance and of the true greatness of men. Now what kind of glory is the greatest? In fact, gentlemen, it is the glory of warriors. Who are they who have left the greatest names among men? They are those who have done their countrymen the greatest good, who have served them most effectually; that is, who have made the greatest conquests, for the ideas, which in their century were called to dominion, and which then represented the destinies of civilization; that is, who have gained the most battles. For the rest, success in war requires a high degree of strong individuality; for if the crowd, and if common soldiers have need only of enthusiasm and of discipline, the chief who presides over that crowd must join to the enthusiasm which enables him to sym-

pathize with his army, that ever-present reflection, which at every moment deliberates and resolves, and calculates and decides, whether he is to follow the plan that he has traced, or to interrupt it, or to change it altogether, or to modify it. Never do masses in a more evident and perceptible manner identify themselves with a great man than on the field of battle; but if this identification is more striking in the case of the great captain, it is more intimate and more profound in that of the great philosopher.

First, let me appeal to the glory which the human race dispenses to those who represent and serve them. There exist not greater names than those of certain philosophers, of Plato and of Aristotle. Whoever knows Alexander and Cæsar knows also Plato and Aristotle. It is true that the human race do not account to themselves for what these two names represent; but neither do they any more account to themselves for what is represented by the names of Cæsar and Alexander. The human race use the first as the very symbols of military and political genius, and the second as the symbols of philosophic genius. Do not listen to schools any more than to parties; listen to the human race and to the masses of mankind: now, as to masses and the human race, philosophy is, and ever will be, Plato and Aristotle. I have cited, gentlemen, the greatest philosophers, in order

to place them by the side of Alexander and of Cæsar ; but in subordination to, and together with them, I might have cited a great number of great philosophers. For it is important to remark that nowhere do there exist greater men than in philosophy. We can account for this phenomenon. The highest degree of individuality exists necessarily in reflection ; for reflection separates us from all that is not ourselves, and places us face to face with ourselves ; but, at the same time, as every reflective act is also an act of thought, there cannot exist a reflective act without some element of a general spirit. The foundation of reflection is what is general, and its form is that of an individual. Now herein consists precisely the most exalted alliance of the two elements which constitute the great man. Finally, you will please to remember that philosophy has been demonstrated to be the ultimate degree, and that which necessarily contains the summary, of the whole developement of a people ; therefore the great philosopher is, in his time and in his country, the ultimate perfection of all other great men, and together with the great captain he is the most complete representative of the people to which he belongs. The two most eminent manifestations of the energy of the human mind are action and thought ; and these are displayed in the highest degree on the field of battle, and in the closet. The two most striking means of

rendering services to mankind are either to elevate the ideas of a certain age to their clearest and most distinct expression, by carrying them on to the very extremes of metaphysical exactness, or to inscribe them upon the face of the world with the sword, by making for them the most extensive conquests. We may hesitate in our choice between the destiny of Aristotle and of Alexander, and between that of Columbus or Vasco de Gama, and of Bacon or Descartes.

You have seen, gentlemen, that the conflict of nations is sorrowful, if the vanquished excite our compassion; we must reserve our greatest sympathy for the victor, because every victory draws infallibly after it a progress of humanity. The conflict of heroes is at first sight not less melancholy than that of nations; and it is sorrowful to see the heroes who constitute the glory of humanity meet each other in fierce encounters; we are in pain how to decide between such noble adversaries: unfortunate heroes excite even a deeper sympathy than nations; for individuality adds to sympathy. But there, also, we must be on the side of the victor, for his is always the better cause; it is the cause of civilization and of humanity, of the present and the future, while the cause of the vanquished party is always that of the past. The great man vanquished is a great man misplaced in his time; and his triumph would have retarded the march of the

world; we should therefore applaud his defeat, because it was profitable; because, with all his great qualities, his virtue, and his genius, he marched counter to humanity and to time. We even find, on reflection, that the vanquished ought to have been vanquished, and that the genius displayed on either side was not equal; defeat alone, makes it already necessary for us to suppose, that he who is vanquished was deceived in the state of the world, that he wanted sagacity and intelligence, that he was short-sighted, that his spirit was confined, and his notions somewhat false. An attentive examination is very unfavorable to the vanquished. I have not the courage to unveil all the instances of misconduct, and all the faults of the last of the Brutuses. They are not unknown to me, but an invincible tenderness for the man is at the bottom of my heart. I should have more firmness face to face with Demosthenes; for after all he was but a great orator. Demosthenes represented, in his own time, the past of Greece, the spirit of the small cities and petty republics, a democracy worn out and corrupted, a time past by that could no longer exist, and which already had ceased to exist. Now to attempt to reanimate a bygone and demolished age is a real wager against all possibility; it would have required a display of force and energy of which all other men, and of which Demosthenes himself, among the rest, (for



after all we are always somewhat like our cotemporaries) was incapable. Demosthenes also failed in his attempt; and with history I add, that his failure was shamefully disgraceful; and besides it was inevitable. When a man, even if he possesses much courage, engages that courage in a contest with impossibilities, the sentiment of the absurdity of such an enterprise, which he cannot disguise to himself, must trouble, disconcert, and sink his spirit; and after having performed prodigies in the tribune, he will end by running away at Cheronea. The eloquence of Demosthenes is somewhat like his life; it is convulsive, and demagogical, but it displays little of the abilities of a statesman; it is full of invective, yet sufficiently logical, and it shows a dexterous and scholarlike use of language. But take the discourses of Pericles, set in order a little by Thucydides, and you will see the difference between the eloquence of the leader of a great people, and of the leader of a party.

The conflict of heroes with each other in war and in politics, is not so painful on reflection as at first sight. The case, gentlemen, is the same with philosophy. The conflict of great philosophical geniuses, properly comprehended, has nothing afflicting in it; for it is always profitable to human reason. The want of time prevents me from laying before you, as I had intended to do, a full explanation of a conflict so prolific in beneficial effects.

I would have shown you, that there also, the vanquished is always in the wrong ; because also there, the battle is between the past and the future. Philosophers at variance with each other, give to the world the spectacle of a certain number of particular ideas true in themselves, but false when taken exclusively, which all stand in need of temporary dominion, in order to develope all that they contain, and at the same time to show what they do not contain, and what is wanting to them ; each serves its time ; and after having been useful, it must disappear and give place to another whose turn is come. In the conflict between two ideas, represented by two great philosophers, their encounter, far from afflicting the friends of humanity and of philosophy, ought, on the contrary, to fill them with hope ; because it gives them notice that humanity and philosophy are preparing to advance by a new step in their progress. We ought to recollect that the perpetual destruction of systems, is the life, the movement, the very history of philosophy. This spectacle, far from engendering skepticism, should fill us with boundless hope and faith, in the excellence of human reason, and in the admirable nature of that humanity, for whose benefit all men of genius labor and contend with each other ; which is enriched by the consequences of their errors, of their conflicts, of their defeats, and of their victories ; which advances only over ruins, but which yet unceasingly advances.



## LECTURE XI.

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### CONTENTS.

Subject of this lecture: a review of the great historians who have written histories of mankind in general. That the idea of an universal history belongs to the eighteenth century. Difficulty of universal history. Its laws: 1st. Not to omit any element of humanity. 2dly. Not to omit any century. That universal history must necessarily have commenced with being exclusive. That the first exclusive point of view must, at the commencement of the eighteenth century, have been a point of view exclusively religious. Thence the universal history of Bossuet. Its merits and its defects. Necessity of a point of view exclusively political. Thence the *new science* of Vico. Its merits and its defects. Necessity of a more comprehensive point of view, and of an universal history more complete, but more superficial in all its parts. Thence Herder. *Ideas concerning a philosophy of history*. Its merits and its defects. A few words in respect to Voltaire, Ferguson, Turgot, and Condorcet. State of universal history since Herder. Richness of some works on particular branches of universal history. Necessity of a new universal history.

GENTLEMEN, —

I have already cursorily designated to you the principal aspects under which I propose to myself, at some future day, to present to you the history of humanity, and that of philosophy, by which it must necessarily be crowned: it now remains for me, to make you acquainted with the manner in which this great subject has hitherto been treated.

When we enter upon a career, not merely for the purpose of shining for a few moments during our course, but of approximating to the goal and reaching it if possible, it is strictly our duty to search for the traces of those who have preceded us, and carefully to distinguish the different roads which they have taken, so that we may recognise those which have conducted them faithfully, as well as those which have led them astray; and thus be enabled to choose the first and to avoid the others. Whosoever, in the study of any science, neglects its history, deprives himself of the experience of centuries, and places himself in the situation of the first inventor; and he thereby needlessly places in opposition to himself the same chances of error which his predecessors were obliged to encounter; yet with this difference, that as the first errors were necessary, they were useful, and consequently more than excusable; whereas a repetition of the same errors, being unnecessary, would be useless, and unproductive of any benefit to others, and therefore disgraceful to himself. Human science, like humanity itself, should be progressive; and a real progress in science is made, only when a new work represents all that preceded it, as well as what is peculiar to its author, when an author resumes all anterior labors, and adds to them the fruits of his own. Now, gentlemen, we can never be sufficiently sure of fulfilling the second condition, unless we have previously fulfilled the first.

The idea of an universal history of humanity is of a very recent date, and this was necessarily the case. No universal history can exist without some plan; and much time was needed, before the human race could even suspect the existence of a plan, amidst all the mobility which appears in the events of this world. It was necessary that many empires, many religions, and many systems should have been seen to have appeared and disappeared, before men could think of comparing them, and of elevating their minds to the contemplation of the general laws which engender and govern them. It was necessary that mankind should have outlived many revolutions, and many instances of apparent disorder, before they could learn to comprehend, that all such instances of disorder are in reality only apparent, and that on high there exists an order, at once invariable and beneficent. It was necessary, that the history of humanity should belong to the last generations, and in fact it was the seventeenth century in which its first idea was conceived; it was the eighteenth century that gave birth to it; and it is perhaps reserved to the nineteenth century to raise it to the elevation of a positive science.

The first attempts that have been made were feeble; and it must appear to us very evident, that the fact could not be otherwise, when we reflect upon all the difficulties which an universal history

must overcome. First, all the elements of humanity must enter into it, and these elements are diverse and numerous; they are industry, the demonstrative and natural sciences, the state, art, religion, and philosophy. This is not all; not only ought a legitimate history of humanity to exclude none of these elements, but it must follow each of these elements, and all of them together, into all their developements, that is, into all the different periods of their existence. Thus, not one of these elements must be retrenched; for then the history of humanity would not be complete, it would be only a part of the history of humanity; nor should a single century be forgotten; for if a single century be forgotten, the particular developement of some element, or at least one of its characteristic marks, or some aspect of humanity, and perhaps an important one, may be misconceived.

To omit none of the fundamental elements of humanity, and not to omit the history of their developement in any century, must therefore be considered as the two fundamental laws of universal history; for it is only by the aid of centuries, and indeed of all centuries, that all the elements of humanity are in every respect fully developed. Now, gentlemen, unless it be supposed that mankind should in this instance have been more fortunate, or have acted more wisely than in any other, it is almost impossible for us to imagine that

they should not have fallen into the error, which we have so often pointed out, of taking a part for the whole, and that characteristic property of things, which at first appeared to them as the most striking, for their total and universal character; so that, although the law of universal history requires completeness, it was to be expected that the first attempts made to compose an universal history, would necessarily all of them be more or less incomplete and exclusive. All of them would indeed assume the title universal history; but each of them would nevertheless be only a partial history; all of them would profess to contain a full view of the whole of humanity, and each of them would nevertheless consider humanity only through the medium of one of its elements, and would follow its development only throughout certain centuries. Now the consequence of this cannot, properly speaking, be called error; but it renders the work which was professedly attempted incomplete. A man who, in writing the history of his species, may omit or retrench from it important elements, may nevertheless be endowed with somewhat of common sense; for the element from which he writes an exclusive history is always, in respect to its foundation, a real element; only that this element, how much soever of reality it may possess, is nevertheless but a particular element; it accounts for the existence of many of the phenomena of history,



but it does not enable us to comprehend them all. Thus, how incomplete soever such histories may be, they may not, on that account, be false; and their sole defect may consist in containing only a part of what is true.

Moreover, we should consider, that if it be good, as we have seen, that a century or that a people should express only one idea, in order to exhaust it and to bring to light all that is contained or wanting in it, it may be equally good that a superior mind should be prepossessed with a particular element of humanity, and should sacrifice to it all other elements, so that this element at least may be thoroughly known. Such a history puts us in possession, under the title of an universal history, of the entire developement of one real and particular element. And if every history, professedly universal, should render us a similar service in respect to the other elements of humanity, each would be useful; and instead of proscribing all those histories, which, professing to be universal, are nevertheless incomplete, we would borrow from each what it contains, and make them complete by joining them together; we may, from the combination of all these partial histories, be able to extract a history which would necessarily be more complete than any one of them, and which, comprising all incomplete histories, would have a chance of becoming a truly complete and universal

history. To despise nothing, to profit by every thing, to shun all that in ourselves is exclusive, but to comprehend and to forgive it in others, to accept of all and to combine all; to strive to reach that which is universal and complete, and to press forward towards it even through the most exclusive points of our predecessors and masters, you know it, gentlemen, such is our aim, such is our method, in history as in philosophy and in all things.

It will therefore be admitted, that all history professing to be universal must, in the beginning, be expected to be incomplete, and to give us only the history of one of the elements of humanity, which, though doubtless real, will be only a particular element of humanity. Let us now endeavor to discover, among the elements of humanity, that which, from its nature, is more likely than any other to attract attention, and to prepossess the mind; that is, to discover the first error and the first truth that must have presented itself to the philosophy of history.

Which of the elements of humanity possesses, in a more eminent degree than all others, the power, at first sight, to subjugate the attention of the observer? It is evident that it cannot be the philosophical element. The object of philosophy is to trace, and to reduce all that exists and that appears to exist, to the ultimate law of its existence, to the most elevated formula of abstraction.

and of reflection. Philosophy is the ultimate developement of humanity, the most clear in itself, but apparently the most obscure. It is therefore impossible that the historian, at the first glance with which he regards humanity, should there perceive philosophy exclusively. This therefore is an error, the existence of which need not in the beginning to be feared. Now, that which is true of the element which is the most elevated, is equally true of that element which is least so. As the first appearance of history could not have commenced with that which is highest, to wit, philosophy; neither could it have commenced with what is lowest, to wit, industry and commerce, and all that is dependent upon them. It is evident that there are other things appertaining to human life, which are more important than these, and to which the performance of a more prominent part is assigned. Here, then, we behold another error, of which, at the commencement of history, we can entertain no apprehension. The arts are doubtless the charm of life, but it is very evident that they do not constitute its substance; and it is equally apparent that in history they always show themselves in the train of government or of religion; only two elements therefore remain.

Religion occupies a very considerable station in life. It takes us at our birth, it impresses upon us its seal, it watches over and governs our infancy

and our youth, it intervenes in all the most important moments of our lives, and it places itself around us in our last hours. We can neither be born, nor live, nor die without it. We find it every where; the earth is covered with its monuments, and we cannot withdraw ourselves from the spectacle of its ceremonies and from its influence. And this has, more or less, been always the case throughout all the epochs of human society. So conspicuous an element of history could not fail to strike the attention of men; it was therefore impossible that historians should not at first have assigned to it a wide space; and as it is the nature of every element, to which a wide space is assigned, to enlarge it still more, we may rest assured that the religious point of view, so vast and so important in itself, must have commenced by absorbing all other elements, and by making itself the centre of the history of humanity. Finally, we must not forget that the idea of the history of humanity dates from the seventeenth, and from the eighteenth century. Now the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are derived from the sixteenth, the fifteenth, and the middle ages. We are the descendants of the middle ages; and the middle ages produced the developement of Christianity. A historian, therefore, appearing at the close of the seventeenth or in the commencement of the eighteenth century, taking nothing into consideration but his personal

consciousness, and the state of society such as it existed in his own time, could not but behold religion every where, and transfer it every where. The first historian of humanity must therefore necessarily have viewed history from the elevation of Christianity, and taken Christianity for its centre, its measure and its aim. Hence it follows, that he must have sacrificed all other elements, and made them subordinate to this ; and it also follows, that in taking a view of all the centuries which as an historian he must have gone through, his attention must particularly have been arrested by those centuries which Christianity fills, or upon which it borders. Finally, as all things which really exist find representatives who are conformable to them, the theological point of view being given, as one of the points of view of universal history which are necessarily exclusive, it must have found its representative and its organ in a theologian and a priest. Hence the necessity of Bossuet.

Consider, gentlemen, how well adapted the Christian religion is to form the basis of a general history of mankind. Christianity is the truth of truths, the complement of all anterior religions which have appeared on earth ; it is the best of all religions, and it is the most accomplished of all ; for this assertion many reasons may doubtless be given which are foreign to our present subject and to this chair ; but among other reasons we may

state this, that the Christian religion is that which of all other religions came the last. Now it is unreasonable to suppose that the religion which came last should not be better than all others, should not embrace and resume them all. Being of all religions that which came the last, it is connected with them all, and thereby with every century. In fact, the Christian religion of the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries had occupied, with its developement, the whole of the middle ages. Its cradle is on the confines of Asia, of Africa, and of Europe. The Mosaic religion is in its developments connected with the history of all the inhabitants of the neighboring countries, of Egypt, of Assyria, of Persia, of Greece, and of Rome; at the same time, that the roots of its origin are entwined with the original roots of the whole human race. Of all exclusive points of view, this is the most extensive. If we seek in the history of the world for one thing only, we cannot find any one, more comprehensive than that religion, of which the first monument is Genesis, and the last work, modern civilization. And this truth is not merely a consequence drawn from truths concealed within Christianity; but it forms a part of what Christianity positively teaches. The Church teaches that the world was made for man; that the existence of man is entirely given, by his relation to God, that is, by religion; that true religion is Christianity;

that by consequence, the history of humanity, neither is nor can be any other than the history of Christianity, of its most remote origins, of the most secret preparations made for it, of its progress, of its triumph, and of its developement. Here you behold what is taught by the Church ; in her view, every thing relates to Christianity. She accounts mere individuals as nothing ; she notices them only, inasmuch as they have either been serviceable or have acted in contrariety to Christianity ; and this is precisely the true theory of individuals in history. She teaches also, and she cannot but teach, that all the importance of empires, considered as individuals, consists in their relation to the service of God, that is, to Christianity. In a word, the Church possesses a history of humanity peculiar to herself, which her dogmas force upon her, a history as inflexible as Christianity itself, and the only orthodox universal history which, in the seventeenth century, a believer and a bishop could propose to believers. Hence, gentlemen, the necessity of Bossuet's plan.

The honor of the conception of his book, has been given to the genius of Bossuet. No, gentlemen, it does not belong to the genius of Bossuet, but to the genius of the Church. Its plan is written in the earliest catechism, and the Church teaches it to the most simple minds : all the originality of Bossuet appears in his execution of that plan.

You see how all things cohere and are combined with each other in this world. No sooner does the theological point of view become that from which history, at a certain time, must necessarily be regarded, than a great theologian is immediately born to represent it; and the genius of the interpreter is found to harmonize perfectly with the point of view which he is called to represent. Does it not seem, for instance, as if the conception of an universal history, in which men, empires, and nations were to be regarded as possessing importance only as the instruments of the fixed and immutable purposes of God, was expressly formed for the genius of Bossuet; of a man who habitually regarded the grandeur of this world as a matter of little importance, who was wont to be the speaker at the tombs of power, of beauty or of glory, — to celebrate departed greatness of every kind, and to behold nothing but misery every where, excepting in the purposes of divine providence? The execution also answers to the conception; that haughty manner of treating heroes and empires, that inflexible march directly to the destined aim, athwart of every thing that would turn aside ordinary historians or distract their attention, that style, lofty and simple as the thought which it expressed, these are what we should admire in Bossuet, and not the general plan of his work, which does not belong to him; nothing but rhetoric could ever lead to the



supposition that the plan of a great work belongs to him who executes it. As to the faults of the *universal history*, they are at this day sufficiently known, and I shall not much insist upon them. First, Bossuet sees every where but one element, religion; and but one people, the Jewish nation. The Arabian race, from which the Jewish nation went forth, is a great race certainly; it has caused great revolutions upon earth; it has produced Moses, who, notwithstanding his great antiquity, still continues to endure; it gave to Europe Christianity, and to Asia Mahomet and the powerful-mussulmanish civilization. Such are no mid-dlerate presents. Yet how fine, how great, and how energetic soever this race may be, it is not alone in the world; and as the time is come when religion itself is referred to civilization, the time is also come when, for the Jewish nation, we should substitute the whole of humanity. The frame of Bossuet's work still subsists; it need only to be enlarged. Bossuet has given scarcely any account of the East; he could speak of the East only as it was known in his time, and he has scarcely spoken of India at all. Nevertheless, before the time when the people of Moses assumes an historical character, there were, behind the Arabian gulph and beyond Persia, countries tenfold more extensive than Judea, countries of which Judea had no idea whatsoever, and of which it knew not even the

names. Central Asia, with all its inhabitants, and the powerful and original civilization which it has produced, was unknown to Mosaism, to which its inhabitants were strangers; their civilization had an independent developement. The roots of Mosaism are ancient and profound; but they do not cover the whole of the earth. Finally, it is useless to speak of the extreme weakness of the details of the *universal history*. Not only is the whole history of the East omitted, as well the whole developement of the arts, of industry, and of philosophy, but even the religious element itself, and the political element which is combined with it, are treated in a very superficial manner; although, at long intervals, some flashes of superior sagacity are visible. All this is at the present day so well known as to sink beneath the level of discussion. In Bossuet's time there already existed historical erudition, but the age of criticism was not yet come.

Such, gentlemen, is the *universal history* which France may claim the honor of having given to Europe as the necessary commencement of the history of humanity; it was the first step of the genius of history, and it could not be the last. You must consider, gentlemen, that although religion acts a part in life which is immensely important, and though it holds an elevated station in society, yet there exist other things besides religion. Re-

ligion is indeed mingled with all the great transactions of our life; yet it intervenes in them only by its sanction; it does not constitute their basis. Their immediate and direct basis is the law, it is the state. The lowest as well as the most elevated acts are accomplished under the inspection and under the control of the law. You can enter into no contract, you cannot trade, you cannot effect the most trifling transaction, without the intervention of the law. Your morality, how little soever it may pass beyond the limits of consciousness, and manifest itself by acts, meets the state which judges and cites it to its tribunals. You may cultivate the sentiment of the beautiful when alone; but you cannot give to your studies any developement without their obtaining publicity, and consequently without their falling under the jurisdiction of the law. Finally, public and juridical life is the theatre upon which all the developements of humanity, whatever may be their principles or their ends, meet together, as it were, by appointment. Hence it follows that, as it was impossible not to be struck, first of all, with the part acted by religion, it was equally impossible not to be struck with the part acted by the laws, by political institutions, and by governments; and as every important element tends to become exclusive, it was necessary that the political element should, in its turn, become the exclusive point of view from which the history

of humanity would be regarded; finally, as every point of view, in its exclusive character, calls forth a representative conformable to itself, and as the theological point of view found its representative in a bishop, so the political point of view must have found its representative in a great jurist. Hence the necessity of Vico.

The *new science*, is the model and perhaps the source of the *spirit of the laws*. It traces particular institutions back to their most general principles, and shows that the changes of human society are effected in accordance with a superior and invariable plan, according to which the future as the past are regulated; and it thereby converts the conjectures and probable conclusions of erudition, and of political science into a true science, of which the basis is the *common nature of nations*. The fundamental character of the *new science*, is the introduction into history of a point of view purely human. In fact, though jurisprudence may, to avoid the appearance of being exclusive, assume the title of *scientia rerum humanarum et divinarum*, the science of things human and divine, it is first of all the science of human things in which it contemplates divine things. Religion also forms, according to Vico, a part of the state and of society; while, according to Bossuet, the state forms a part of religion. According to Vico, religion relates to humanity, but according

to Bossuet, the services of humanity are entirely at the disposal of religion: the point of view has completely changed, and this was, in my opinion, an immense step in the progress of the science of history, of which the ultimate aim is to cause every thing to reenter into humanity, to refer every thing to humanity in this world, reserving to ourselves the right of afterwards referring the destinies of humanity and of the world itself to something higher than both. Besides, in Bossuet, history is indeed written in conformity with a certain plan, but every part of it is treated superficially; while, on the contrary, in Vico, deep researches are made into the history of each different nation. According to Vico, the existence of a people forms a circle, of which he has determined all the points with precision. In every people there must, according to him, according to real facts, and to the true nature of things, exist necessarily three degrees, three epochs. The first is the epoch of envelopement, improperly called the epoch of barbarism; in which religion rules, in which the actors and the legislators are, so to speak, gods, that is, priests; it is in every people the age of divinity. The second epoch of the history of a people is the substitution of the heroic to the theological principle; then that which is considered as divine, still continues to exist; but there also exists already something that is human; and the hero is,

as in the Greek mythology, so to speak, the inter-medial between heaven and earth. Finally, in the third age, the man goes forth from the hero as the hero went forth from the god; and civil society arrives at an independent form. This done, the man is completely developed and begins to fall into decay; the people ends; a new people with the same nature recommences, and goes through the same career. The perpetual and necessary returns of these three degrees are what Vico has consecrated under the remarkable denomination of the recurrences of history (*Ricorsi*). Thus one nature is common to all nations; and the same nature, being subject to the same laws, causes the same phenomena to occur in the same order. Neither ought we any more to forget that Vico was the first who, instead of suffering himself to be imposed upon by the splendor that encircles certain names, was bold enough to submit them to a strict examination, and who has taken from many illustrious personages in history their personal greatness, in order to give it back to humanity itself, to the time, to the century, in which these persons made their appearance. Vico has demonstrated that Homer, Orpheus, and some others, should be considered, not as simple individuals, but as the representatives of their epoch, as the symbols of their century; and that, if they really existed, all the works of the people of the century which they represent in

history, have been added to their own, and placed to their account. He was also the first who discussed the primitive times and fundamental laws of Rome, and he has indicated to modern criticism some of its most beautiful points of view; such are the merits of Vico; they justify his high renown.

The fundamental vice of the *new science* is the preponderance of the political element, and the almost total omission of the two elements, art and philosophy. It was also natural that he who, among the elements of history, had especially attended to the political element, should have chiefly considered those epochs in which this element acts an important part, and should have neglected those in which religion was generally predominant, namely, the oriental epoch. The *new science* has another fault. The existence of every people is undoubtedly regulated by a certain plan, and the course of its existence is the circle described by Vico; every people has its own point of departure, its middle, and its end; every people has a progress and a history peculiar to itself; but is there not also a progress and a history of humanity itself? And, besides the common laws which govern each of the different nations, do there not also exist other relations between them, relations of unlikeness as to their character, relations of priority and posteriority in time, relations which

have their reasons, and which exist in conformity with laws, and indeed with necessary laws, which must be referred to a plan much more extensive than that of the existence of each particular people? This is what Vico did not perceive. Greece being given, he thence develops the whole of history; he does the same in respect to Rome, and the same again in respect to the middle ages. But what is the relation of the middle ages to Rome, and of Rome to Greece? Immersed in the *Ricorsi*, in the periodical recurrences of the same elements in every nation, Vico forgets to inquire what, from recurrence to recurrence, becomes of humanity itself; he points out the laws of the recurrence of the same elements in every people; but he does not point out the laws of these recurrences in respect to each other, by any reference to the whole of humanity. It is not enough to repeat to us that humanity advances; we should also be told by virtue of what law it advances. To speak of a progress, without determining its mode and its law, is to convey no information whatsoever. In general, though profound in the history of each people, and, to speak his language, in the common nature of nations, Vico is feeble in showing the progressive developement of humanity, and in determining the laws which preside over that developement.

Such, gentlemen, are the two great works with



which the history of humanity opens in the eighteenth century. These two works are, like the two points of view which they represent, equally true in themselves, and equally incomplete. But in contradicting they correct each other, and push forward with equal force towards a more comprehensive point of view. After having traversed and exhausted the two great exclusive points of view which necessarily presented themselves at the entrance of its career, nothing remained for the science of history but to forsake the two exclusive points of view, of religion and of the state, and to give each of them their true place, in a more extensive frame capable of holding both, and at the same time of including the elements which Bossuet and Vico had sacrificed. Hence the necessity of Herder.

The two first works with which I have been entertaining you, gentlemen, are the points of departure, the first essays of the genius of history; the work of Herder is a monument which indicates an epoch far more advanced: it appeared half a century later than the two others. In fact, all that was wanting to Bossuet and to Vico is found in Herder; the fundamental idea of Herder is precisely to give an account of all the elements of humanity, of all times, of all the epochs of humanity. It is this that gives to the work of Herder an incontestable superiority over those of both of his

illustrious predecessors. You there find religion, the state, the two points of view of Vico and of Bossuet; and moreover you find there the arts, poetry, industry, and commerce, and even philosophy; not one of the elements of a people and of an epoch is neglected. And not only do you find there the history of these different elements in the epochs of civilization best known to us, as Greece, and Rome, and the middle ages, but you find them also in the history of the oriental world, of that world which was so little known in Herder's time, and where the traces of no footsteps are found prior to his own. Races, languages, religions, arts, governments, systems of philosophy, all find their respective places in the history of humanity, such as it was conceived by Herder. We must say besides, that he did not rest satisfied with causing all the elements of humanity and all its times to enter into the frame of history; but that he very well saw, and has also shown, that all these elements are developed harmoniously; and even that they are developed progressively. The work of Herder is the first great monument erected to the perpetual progress of humanity in every sense, and in all directions. I must add, that among the different parts of which this work is composed, all those which in every nation relate to arts and to literature, are treated in a masterly style; not only are all the knowledges of his time there summed up

and skilfully employed, but he has himself even added to them ; it is there, that for the first time, primitive poetries, and particularly Hebrew poetries and those of the middle ages, have been well explained ; it is there that poetry, for the first time, was put in its proper place ; that popular songs were freed from the reproach of barbarism, with which they were loaded, and that it was proved that the primitive poetries of nations are monuments of their history, as faithful as they are splendid. Nor am I willing to forget, among the merits of Herder, that he ascribed high importance to the theatre of history. Herder saw that man could not, in this world, withdraw himself from the influence of climates and of places ; and in his hands, physical geography acts for the first time a conspicuous part in history. These, gentlemen, are superior titles to our esteem, and such as even weighty defects cannot obscure.

The first defect of Herder is owing to his having entered upon history with a philosophical system too unfavorable to a proper estimation of the energies and the liberty of man. Herder, though so great a poet, was nevertheless brought up in the notions of that philosophy which predominated in his time, namely, between 1760 and 1780 ; I mean the philosophy of Locke. To this philosophy, rather dull in itself, he has indeed added the brilliant coloring of his own genius, and he has contrived to infuse

his personal enthusiasm into ideas which scarcely seemed susceptible of it. Yet, though he very clearly perceived the intimate relations which bind man to nature, yet he was too much inclined to regard man merely as the child and passive scholar of nature, and did not ascribe sufficient influence to his free agency; so that, when the suggestions of nature, of sensibility, and of imagination, do not sufficiently explain certain developements of civilization, instead of referring them to the energies of the human mind, Herder has recourse to mystical explanations, in contradiction to the theory and to the general spirit of his work. Thus, in consequence of having made man too passive, and almost exclusively sensitive, he no longer knows how to solve the problem of languages; and like Rousseau and afterwards M. de Bonald, he solves it by the *Deus Machina*. The institution of language is, according to Herder, a divine institution; perhaps it is; but this is, nevertheless, a solecism in Herder's work, in which every thing is humanly explained. If God intervenes in this difficulty, he may be made to intervene in other difficulties equally great; and the fundamental idea of the whole work would thus be destroyed.

As a secondary defect, I must remark, that if the arts and literature are admirably treated by Herder, there are other parts which he has treated very feebly. But it is no more than justice to

recollect that, at that epoch, these parts had not yet been treated profoundly in any other work ; and that no universal history can, in respect to the depth of each particular part, be expected to equal works of special history, but must follow them at a certain distance. Finally, the last fault which I shall lay to the charge of Herder is his want of preciseness, and a certain character of indecision and vagueness, injurious to the impression made upon the whole, by his excellent qualities. Herder admits that in humanity there exists a continual progress ; but he determines the general laws of that progress badly, and leaves its particular laws totally undetermined. It is very natural that Herder, being rather a literary character than a philosopher, and living in the midst of the elegant society of Weymar, should have somewhat modeled his work according to the taste of men of the world ; but we cannot at once charm the world and satisfy philosophy. Herder has avoided formulæ, and he has been much praised for having done so ; but I must take the liberty of censuring him severely on that very account. In such matters our principal object ought not to be to please, but to enlighten and to instruct. Now formulæ constitute the most lucid expression of historical truth ; because it is by their means only (I am not now speaking of arbitrary formulæ, but of those which express the very laws of the human mind,) that the human mind is enabled to understand itself, its works, and its history.

Notwithstanding its defects, Herder's work is, even to the present day, the greatest monument that has yet been raised to the history of humanity; since that no great attempt of the same kind has yet been made; for the works analogous to Herder's which have appeared, either at the same time or shortly before or after it, in England, Scotland, and France, are scarcely worth the pains of a serious examination; I shall content myself with barely mentioning them. Voltaire possesses the merit of having thought of introducing into history *the manners and customs of nations*, and the details of private life; this is something. Besides this we must acknowledge that Voltaire is not destitute of the sentiment of humanity; but this sentiment, badly directed by a criticism without exactness and depth, is constantly degenerating into tolerably good declamations and rather unfortunate tragic representations, which, whatever may be their intrinsic merit, are totally misplaced in history, where passion and sentiment should give place to intelligence. Besides, when we put ourselves in so violent a passion against what for so long a time has governed the human race, it is in fact humanity itself which we accuse. For after all, a government or a religion can neither establish nor sustain itself alone; it must meet with some consent among mankind. It is true that, towards the close of its existence, it may sometimes try to

do without it; but in its beginning no religion and no government could be established, without, I do not say the mere consent, but without the approbation, the confidence, and the love, in a word, without the sympathy of the masses of mankind with the religious or political laws announced to them.

Neither is it possible to take into serious consideration Ferguson's much vaunted work on civil society; a work without any decided character, in which a very estimable tone of morality prevails, but in which weakness of thought seems to contend for preeminence with weakness of erudition.

Among the works written at this epoch, gentlemen, we must particularly note one written by a young man who was then a student of the Sorbonne, and who in taking his degree of licentiate, composed two discourses, in Latin, on the history of humanity in its relations with the history of Christianity and of the Church. These two discourses of the young seminarist contain more ideas than the two long works of Voltaire and Ferguson both together; and if politics had not withdrawn him from history and philosophy, I have no doubt that this licentiate of the Sorbonne would have obtained a place by the side of Montesquieu, and would have given one great man more to France. You perceive that I am speaking of Turgot. Condorcet, the friend and disciple both of Voltaire and Turgot, has depos-

ited something of the character of his two masters in the interesting work which, on the eve of perishing, he bequeathed to posterity. In this work a sentiment of humanity prevails which gives life and color to every page, and which may in some measure induce us to pardon the declamations in which its author indulges and which were then in fashion, as well as the total absence of critical judgment and erudition which it betrays. Nevertheless, I cannot help regretting that the "*Esquisse*" of Condorcet is often put in the hands of young men at too early an age; for the nourishment which it affords to their minds is of a bad quality. What young men require, gentlemen, are books, learned and profound, and even somewhat difficult; that they may become accustomed to encounter difficulties, and that thus they may serve their apprenticeship to labor and to life; but it is really a pity to distribute to them, in the most reduced and slightest form, a few ideas without any real substance, communicated in such a manner that a boy of fifteen years of age may learn the little book by heart in a day, may be able to recite it from beginning to end, and thus be induced to believe that he is not ignorant of humanity and of the world. No, gentlemen, men of energetic minds are formed by energetic studies; those young men among you who feel the importance of futurity should leave to women and to children



little books and elegant trifles; it is only by the exercise of manly thought that the young men of France can hope to rise to the exalted destinies of the nineteenth century. I am the more desirous to be fully understood on this subject, as it gives me pleasure to recognise in the work of Condorcet, as well as that of Voltaire, a sentiment of humanity very true in itself, but unfortunately led astray by the want of erudition and by declamation. Besides, all that is good, all that has been so highly praised in the *Esquisse* of Condorcet, is to be found in Herder, namely, the sentiment of humanity, the idea of perpetual progress, and that ardent love of civilization, which in Herder is carried even to enthusiasm; in Vico that enthusiasm does not appear in the form, but it exists at the foundation of his work. These are the works that I would recommend to my young hearers; they will not study them without imbibing a more enlightened love of humanity and of civilization, of all that is beautiful, and of all that is honest and honorable: I congratulate myself on having encouraged two of my young friends, M. M. Michelet and Quinet, to give to France Vico and Herder.

Since Herder, gentlemen, what has been done, and what still remains to be done? There must undoubtedly rest upon the nineteenth century the obligation of erecting a new monument to history, as superior to that of Herder as the new century

must be to that which has passed away ; and the ways are already prepared that lead to a new philosophy of history, which, avoiding the exclusive points of view of Bossuet and Vico, and faithfully adhering to Herder's spirit of universality, must enter more deeply into what Herder has but slightly touched, and substitute for the vagueness and indecision of his ideas a preciseness and a rigor truly scientific. But in the mean time, while we are yet in expectation that such a work will be produced by the combined labors of the European learned world, the only thing that could be done since the appearance of Herder's work has been done ; his work has been decomposed, so that at some future day it may be recomposed in a state of higher perfection. The success of Herder's work was immense ; from the very time of its first appearance men of the finest genius have been struck with the general ideas which it contains, and even with the manner in which some of its parts, namely, the arts and poetry, were treated ; and the motion thereby communicated to the spirit of historical inquiry rapidly increasing, new researches of all kinds were made, which, commencing from the point at which Herder had arrived, proceeded much farther upon the road which he had traced. His inspirations fecundated all the special branches of history, and to universal history succeeded histories, entering into profound

researches concerning each of the elements of humanity and each of its great epochs. Now, when criticism at the present day, enlightened by the labors of the last forty years, looks into the work which originally inspired them, it does not feel the same enthusiastic admiration of it; for this must be impossible unless science had since that time made no advances; and in its severity it may be inclined to approximate towards injustice. But we must not forget that it is a monument constructed and erected by the labor of a single man, and indeed between the years 1760 and 1780. Since that time, thank God, every thing has been advancing forward; while the work of Herder remains in the same place. In respect to the history of religions, for instance, without mentioning Lessing's little masterpiece entitled *The Education of the Human Race*, the great work of Creutzer, which a worthy scholar of the Norman school has given to France, has left that of Herder far behind it. Winkelman and M. Quatremère de Quincy have equally surpassed Herder in all that relates to the arts of Greece. M. M. de Schlegel, whose minds were perhaps formed by Herder, have penetrated much farther than their master into Greek and Roman literature. Heeren, in his excellent work on the commercial relations of ancient nations, has also made new advances into the knowledge of this important

branch of the history of humanity. Montesquieu has treated of the spirit of the laws much more extensively and profoundly than Herder. Finally, that part of Herder's work which treats of philosophical systems must be acknowledged to be far below the state of our present knowledge; but it would be extremely unjust to require from him who is the father of all these partial works, the same depth of knowledge and of criticism in the whole of his work, which his successors have introduced into its different branches. There must always remain something that is superficial, or at least insufficient, in all universal histories; in the same manner as it seems to fall to the lot of particular histories, to be not always able to combine, with the solidity of criticism and erudition, those speculative views which embrace a vast horizon.

Such is at present the state of historical science in Europe: great and solid works have been undertaken and accomplished in every branch and on every epoch of history; it now remains to unite all these particular pieces, so as to form a great whole, which shall combine the solidity of particular histories with the superiority of general views; which after having, like Herder's work, been the centre of all anterior works and the measure of the state of human knowledge at the present moment, may in its turn become the subject of a new decomposition, and the point of departure of new special

works, still more exact and more profound than the preceding, which shall lead to the necessity of a new summary, of a new universal history, superior to the preceding; and so on continually, redounding more and more to the profit of humanity and of science. I shall endeavor, gentlemen, in the course of my instruction, to present to you the results to which I have arrived in respect to the history of humanity; but I shall, first of all, strenuously exert myself to treat with care and in detail, that special branch of the history of humanity which is entrusted to me, namely, the history of philosophy. And to finish this introduction, I shall devote the next lecture to the purpose of giving you an account of the great works, of which, for a century past, the history of philosophy has been the subject.

## LECTURE XII.

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Subject of the lecture: Of the great historians of philosophy. Conditions of a great development of the history of philosophy: 1st, a great development of philosophy itself; 2dly, a great development of erudition. The first movement of modern philosophy was Cartesianism: Cartesianism must have produced, and it has produced, a history of philosophy which represents it. Brucker. His general character. His merits and his defects. The second great movement of philosophy was the conflict of sensualism with idealism, towards the close of the eighteenth century. Thence two histories of philosophy in opposite directions: Tiedemann and Tennemann. Their general character. Their merits and their defects. Present state of things.

GENTLEMEN, —

IF in the individual, reflection is that faculty of the mind which enters last upon the exercise of its functions, and if in a people and in the course of an epoch philosophy, which represents reflection, is that element which, of all other elements of that people and of that epoch, is developed the last; and if the solid and fundamental study of history in general dates from the eighteenth century, the consequence is, that the history of philosophy, which follows after the study of all other branches of history, could have appeared in its proper place only in the eighteenth century. The

eighteenth century is eminently distinguished among all other centuries by the sentiment of humanity. It was in the eighteenth century that, for the first time, humanity began to take an interest in herself. She would then have been wanting to herself if she had neglected the history of what is most important to her, the history of reflection, of reason, of philosophy. But besides this general reason, there existed special causes, more active and more fruitful, which in the eighteenth century developed the history of philosophy.

Inquire, if you please, what it is that can possibly excite an interest in the history of any science whatsoever. It is the existence of an interest in that science itself. Suppose, for instance, that a science should have been cried down and almost totally neglected; surely nothing but excessive curiosity could, at such a time, induce a man to take an interest in the history of such a science, and to permit it to occupy his time. You will remark that historical knowledge is not easily acquired; it is the fruit of laborious, difficult, and persevering exertions, into which men do not readily engage without some important motive; and this motive could, in this instance, be no other than the lively interest with which the science inspired them. And not only is the cultivation of a science necessary in order to excite an interest in its history, but it is indispensably requisite in order

to enable us to comprehend the labors bestowed upon it in former ages, and thus to understand its history. Place Euclid into the hands of a man who had never studied mathematics; in the first place he would take no interest in it, and then he would not be able to understand it. This is evident in respect to mathematics; but it is not less true in respect to the moral sciences, to jurisprudence, to legislation, and to political history in general. How can a man who is not familiar with the ideas upon which the moral sciences turn, who has never meditated upon the problems which they contain, comprehend the solutions given of them in different centuries. The same is, in a still higher degree, the case in respect to philosophy. It would indeed be strange if a man who had never studied philosophical questions should be able to understand the works that have been written on philosophy. Here, more than elsewhere, historical intelligence is directly proportionate to scientific intelligence. Hence it follows that in every epoch in which philosophy did not excite a high degree of interest and was not cultivated with great care, men could have taken scarcely any interest in the history of philosophy, and could not have comprehended it. On the contrary, if we suppose philosophy to have flourished at any particular epoch, the history of philosophy must then have flourished also. A great philosophical movement, therefore, is the condition



*sine qua non*, and, at the same time, it is the certain principle of an equal movement in the philosophy of history. Every great speculative movement bears within itself, and sooner or later it produces necessarily, its own history of philosophy, which reflects it and which is in conformity with it; for we never represent to ourselves the ideas of other men in any other point of view than in that in which we regard our own ideas. Let us apply these observations to the eighteenth century.

In order to know whether the eighteenth century could have produced any great histories of philosophy, and what must have been the character of these great histories, we must inquire whether the eighteenth century has produced any great movements in philosophy, and what was the character of these movements. Now, gentlemen, the eighteenth century, having given a vast impulse to philosophy, whence philosophy must have derived a great developement, and the eighteenth century having produced schools of philosophy very different from each other, it must have produced very different histories of philosophy. We may, at pleasure, either study the great histories of philosophy in the different philosophic schools which must have produced them, as we study effects in their causes; or, as we study causes in their effects, we may follow the great philosophic schools in their last results, in their histories of philosophy.

Therefore, in order to study and to comprehend the characters of the great histories of philosophy, which the eighteenth century has produced and bequeathed to the nineteenth, it is absolutely necessary to cast our eyes upon the great philosophic schools which the eighteenth century has produced.

Modern history is nothing but the developement of the elements of which the middle ages were composed ; modern philosophy can therefore be nothing but the developement of the philosophy of the middle ages. Every developement implies a metamorphosis, a change of form. Modern philosophy could not go forth from that of the middle ages, without taking from it its form. And what was the form of the philosophy of the middle ages ? It was submission to some other authority than that of reason. What is the character of modern philosophy ? It is submission to the authority of reason alone. Now, which is the philosophic movement that has wrought this decisive revolution ? Which is the philosophic movement that filled, with the brightness of its principle, and with the fruitful variety of its consequences, the seventeenth century and the commencement of the eighteenth ? It is the philosophy of Descartes. In every philosophy we must seek for three things, 1st. the general character, the form of that philosophy ; 2dly. its positive method ; 3dly. its results,

or the system in which that method terminates. The form and the character of the philosophy of Descartes is independence; it is the negation of any other authority than that of reflection and of thought. The method of Descartes is psychology; it is the account which we render to ourselves of what passes in the soul, or in consciousness, which is the visible theatre of the soul. In fact, it is to say, as Descartes did, that we can know nothing of exterior existence, nor even of our own existence but by thought, which necessarily manifests itself in consciousness; that is, that the point of departure of all true knowledge is the analysis of thought, that is of consciousness; such is the method of Descartes. I can know nothing, not even that I am, unless I think; therefore the study of thought is the sole point of departure in the study of human knowledge. Now, gentlemen, precisely as is the character, the exterior form of the Cartesian philosophy, such is and will be the constant character of modern philosophy; and the Cartesian method has also become the only legitimate method of modern philosophy. In acknowledging that the authority of philosophy is founded upon reason, and that, in respect to ourselves, the point of departure for the study of philosophy is the analysis of consciousness, of that consciousness which each of us possesses within himself, which is the book ever open to his inspection, of which true philosophy is only the

developement and the comment, — we are all the sons of Descartes. The psychological method was introduced into the world by Descartes, and it will never abandon modern philosophy unless modern philosophy should consent to abandon itself.

But do not forget, gentlemen, that every nascent method is feeble; do not forget that a revolution does not at first reach all its consequences. It was thus with the Cartesian revolution; it had its commencements, and its end was not visible in its first appearance. The method of Descartes, that method now so firm upon which modern philosophy reposes, staggered in its first steps and was almost overthrown. Certainly I am far from thinking that, in the ontological results of the Cartesian philosophy, there are not some points of view which are admirable and eternally true; but it cannot be denied that in many cases, and in the greater part of his system, Descartes, forsaking interior observation, with which he had commenced, terminates in hypothesis. He who had rejected every other authority than that of thought, being embarrassed at not finding in thought alone or in consciousness alone, which he had not sufficiently interrogated, a reason for admitting the existence of the external world which surrounds us; and being neither willing nor able to destroy the irresistible persuasion of its existence, admits it on the ground of faith in God, in that God whom he had previously

discarded, whom he has not yet demonstrated, and whose existence was consequently nothing but a gratuitous supposition. Descartes appeals to divine veracity in order to authorize the truth of those impressions which attest to us the reality of the external world. This is a mere hypothesis; and you may easily discover its nature. It is somewhat theological; so that, after having first commenced by insisting upon the observation of consciousness as the only source of knowledge, he terminates abruptly enough in an ontological hypothesis for which no justification is offered; in an hypothesis bearing precisely the impression of the old philosophy which Descartes undertook to combat, namely, a theological character.

Descartes reigned in all Europe for more than half a century. The great men whom his philosophy formed and gave the world were, in France, Malebranche, in Holland, Spinoza, in Ireland, Berkeley, who must also be referred to the school of Descartes, and in Germany, Leibnitz. All these were imbued with the spirit of his method, and, like Descartes, their philosophy more or less rapidly terminated in hypotheses, and indeed in hypotheses more or less theological. We need only call to mind the vision in God of Malebranche, the idealism of Berkeley, and the preestablished harmony of Leibnitz. These are the first fruits of Cartesianism. You must also remember that

Descartes, after having first proclaimed the analysis of thought as the only point of departure of philosophy, had immediately after his first step, as it were, struck into the road of geometry. Thought being given, and along with it personal existence, he no longer employs induction but deduction, which, with its whole retinue, is necessarily geometrical. The great thinker commenced with thought; the great geometrician gave to thought the form of geometry. Berkeley, Malebranche, and Spinoza, without being mathematicians of the first order, possessed in this branch all the knowledges of their time; Leibnitz was himself the very genius of mathematics. All of these affected the rigor of geometrical demonstration, and pushed it even to the verge of becoming an abuse.

These men of superior abilities, whom I have just named, diffused the Cartesian philosophy only among the first-rate thinkers of the age. The necessity still remained of causing this philosophy, with all its good qualities and its imperfections, to descend into inferior regions; to imbue with its spirit rising generations, and to give to it futurity by introducing it into the schools. Descartes was a gentleman and a soldier, who wrote books and bequeathed them to posterity, without much caring about their success; Malebranche was a monk, Berkeley an eminent bishop, Spinoza a recluse, and Leibnitz a statesman, who left nothing but

fragments in every department of science. There was wanting to the Cartesian philosophy a great professor; this was the place and the destiny of Wolf. Wolf is the representative of the Cartesian philosophy in the school. The method of Descartes is at length consecrated; psychology constitutes, so to speak, officially the basis and the point of departure of all good philosophy; for, it cannot be too often repeated, that if we must refer the progress and the perfection of the psychological method to a time much nearer our own, the glory of having invented and first employed that method belongs to Descartes. Wolf, then, has a regular psychology, in which we find all that was known of psychology in the first commencement of the Cartesian philosophy. The philosophy of Descartes assumed, in the hands of Wolf, the form which will always be given to it by a professor, an apparatus somewhat pedantic. Descartes and his successors had already inclined to the geometrical form; in the writings and in the instruction of Wolf that form assumed an exclusive character. Its whole process there is carried on by principles, by axioms, by definitions, and by corollaries. After having left the school, philosophy once more entered into it. In another respect, if in Wolf the independence of mind remains entire, if philosophy is separated from theology, it bears nevertheless, without its knowledge, a semi-theological character.

Wolf is a Leibnitzian, and the high orthodoxy of Leibnitz is well known. Such is the course of revolutions; they first rush forward beyond their aim, and then they return to settle themselves at a point very near to that from which they started. They never lose ground, but after many movements they are satisfied with having gained a single step; and step by step, mankind discover at some future period that humanity has advanced greatly. But humanity advances only by a single step at a time. The first Cartesian movement ended with Wolf; there its circuit was completed; it had arrived at its last terminus in all things; its form, its method, its doctrine, in evil as in good, had found their ultimate developement.

After Wolf, nothing remained to be done by Cartesianism but to produce a history of philosophy. All the conditions of its existence were given; an immense interest in all that regards philosophy had been diffused by a generation of great men; a new method excited a high degree of curiosity to know the different methods that philosophers had employed before the existence of Cartesianism; and a complete system, psychological, logical, ontological, cosmological, and mathematical, insured to the new philosophy the means of entering upon, of embracing, and of measuring the scope of all the systems which former times could present to it.



One condition only still remained to be fulfilled. To enable us to compose a history of philosophy, it is not sufficient to be interested in and to be able to understand the past, it is also necessary to have a perfect knowledge of it; in a word, erudition is an exterior condition, which must be combined with the intrinsic conditions, which I have already stated to you as those by which the possibility of a history of philosophy is given. Now these conditions were admirably fulfilled in Germany at the time of Wolf; every body knows that Germany is the classic land of erudition and of historical criticism.

From these different reasons collected and combined, results the necessity of a history of philosophy, and the necessity of Brucker. Brucker is the representative of the first movement of modern philosophy in the history of philosophy; and herein consists also the necessity of his merits and of his defects. The eminent merit which presents itself at the first view of Brucker's work is the merit of being complete. The "*Historia Critica Philosophiæ*" commences almost with the world and the human race, and it ends only with the last days of the historian's life. The care with which Brucker has sought for the first traces of philosophy is wonderful; he commences at the deluge, and consequently with his *Philosophia Diluviana*; he has even endeavored to ascend still higher and

to furnish us with a philosophia antidiluviana. America, young as it is, has not escaped the attentive inquiries of Brucker; he searches in the most barbaric parts for the vestiges of philosophy. It is impossible to show more respect for reason, for philosophy, and for humanity; and on this consideration, also, Brucker deserves, in the highest degree, the respect of every friend of humanity and of philosophy. He has entered upon, gone through, and expounded, all the systems of every century. And in this there is no question of superficial glances; the conscientious erudition of Brucker has gone to the bottom of every thing. Brucker has read with the greatest care all the works of which he speaks, and when some of them could not be procured by him, which was inevitable, he never speaks of them without precise references, and without specifying his authorities, which he carefully enumerates, in order to avoid leading any into error. Brucker was certainly one of the most learned men of his time; nor is his impartiality inferior to his erudition. See what long and faithful extracts he gives of every doctrine; and these he divides and subdivides into different points, into a certain number of articles, which are classed and their numbers specified in an order which leaves nothing to be desired. In general, order is one of the great merits of Brucker. He follows chronological order, the very order in

which it was given to humanity to develop itself; in fact, every other order is an insult to humanity, a sort of philosophical impiety. Brucker presents with scrupulous exactness all systems in the series of time, and in the succession of their real development, with clear and precise classifications, of which the apparent rigor reminds us of Wolf, and apprises us that Brucker is in history the representative of a school of geometricians.

The faults of Brucker's work consist in the exaggerations of his best qualities. Brucker is complete, but he is ostentatiously so. As I said before, he ascends even beyond the deluge; and he loses himself in minute researches concerning what he calls *philosophia barbarica* and *philosophia exotica*. Thence it happens, that although he had separated philosophy from theology, yet his anxiety to be complete makes him sometimes forget to adhere strictly to that division. In fact, if somewhat of philosophy is discoverable in nascent humanity, it contains much more of religion and of mythology; and the learned Brucker, who never mingles these two things in the body of his history, confounds them in its origin. He relates fragments of the mythology of Persia, of Chaldea, and of Syria, and passes them for philosophical systems. Brucker is full of erudition, but he is deficient in criticism; he cites with the greatest care all his sources and all his authorities; but he

scarcely ever discusses them; and he often relies upon authorities which are more than uncertain, and upon monuments of very suspicious authenticity. Finally, if I have done justice to the order which reigns in Brucker's history, I must add that, that order is more apparent than real. Brucker follows the order of chronology; but he follows it mechanically, and without comprehending its depth; he does not see that the external order of time contains a true order of generation, and of the relations of causes to their effects; he did not know that every system, that every philosophic epoch must, relative to the system and to the epoch which succeeds it, be regarded as a cause; so that these systems, taken altogether, may be viewed as a series of causes and effects united with each other by necessary relations, which are the laws of history. All these things escaped the notice of Brucker, who saw in the succession of systems only a fortuitous juxtaposition. The order of Brucker, therefore, is but veritable confusion, disguised under the geometrical apparatus of Wolfianism, under classifications, divisions and subdivisions, which seem to resemble a necessary plan, but which really contain no plan at all. To resume; Brucker represents, in the history of philosophy, the first revolution which wrested philosophy from the middle ages; this revolution, glorious to the human mind as it was, engendered modern

philosophy, but it did not complete it. In the same manner the *Historia Critica Philosophiæ* is an admirable monument of extensive erudition, and of apparent clearness; but it did not, and it could not, display the ultimate perfection of the history of philosophy. A disciple of the seventeenth century, Brucker flourished in the commencement and in the middle of the eighteenth. Brucker is the father of the history of philosophy, as Descartes is the father of modern philosophy. His work was the basis of all the contemporaneous works of the same kind. As these works do not possess any remarkable character peculiar to themselves, we shall not stop to consider them. History, gentlemen, is not a chronicle; it notices only what has a decisive character. In order to find new histories of philosophy which, after Brucker, shall possess an historical character, we must address ourselves to the new philosophic movements which went forth from the Cartesian revolution, and which filled and divided among themselves the last moiety of the eighteenth century.

It was necessary that the human mind should take a new step; that modern civilization should advance, and with it philosophy. The result of the Cartesian revolution was to throw a light upon the chaos of scholasticism; but the darkness of so long a period had become too dense to be dissipated at once and in a single day; and the philosophy of

Descartes, after having astonished and put in commotion the seventeenth century, no longer satisfied the eighteenth. In the vast frame of Cartesianism, such as Wolf left it, two different points of view, two philosophies, coexisted and dwelt peaceably together; namely, that which, finding in consciousness a passive and fatal element which it cannot refer to free thought, refers it to the exterior world, and considers particularly that aspect of the soul and of things; and also that other philosophy which, finding also in consciousness phenomena very different from those of sensation, refers them to thought, and neglects all the rest, in order to abide principally in thought. These two philosophies coexisted in Wolfianism; and consequently, they could not have attained to their complete developement. That all the hidden powers that were concealed in them might show themselves and be fully developed, it was necessary that each of these philosophies should be developed in an exclusive manner. Thence arose the necessity of two opposite movements, which should manifest in their whole extent and with all their energies, the two elements which were to be found in Wolfianism; and hence the necessity that empiricism and idealism should no longer appear enveloped in each other in such a manner that neither the one nor the other showed or knew its true character, but that both of them should be completely developed; that

they consequently should be separated and placed in full contradiction with each other, and engaged in that energetic and fruitful warfare which filled the latter part of the eighteenth century, and which the nineteenth century found in the world at its entrance into it. I shall rapidly designate both of them, and I shall follow them into the different histories of philosophy in which it was necessary that each of them should terminate.

Locke, gentlemen, is also a descendant of Descartes; he is imbued with the spirit of his method; he rejects every other authority than that of reason, and he proceeds from the analysis of consciousness; but instead of beholding in consciousness all the elements that are comprehended in it, he rejects entirely the interior element, liberty and intelligence; he considers principally the exterior element, and he is particularly struck with sensation; the philosophy of Locke is a branch of Cartesianism, but it is one that is partial and exclusive. It was necessary that that philosophy should have its developement; but it is a fact that it did not attain to it in the country of its author. England, gentlemen, is a very considerable island; in England every thing is insular, every thing stops at certain limits, nothing is there developed on a great scale. England is not destitute of invention; but history declares that she does not possess that power of generalization and deduction, which alone

is able to push an idea or a principle to its entire developement, and to draw from it all the consequences which it encloses. Compare the political revolution of England with ours and you must perceive the profound difference of their respective characters; on the one hand every thing is local and proceeds from secondary principles; on the other, every thing is general and ideal.\* Now, in the same manner as it was necessary that the principle of the English political reform should cross the channel in order to be spread abroad in the world, and to bear its fruits; so it was also necessary that the principle of the philosophy of sensation should cross the channel and arrive among a people who, on many accounts, on account of its possessing a language almost universal, and a central geographical situation, on account of its character at once decided and flexible, of the precision and energy of its thought which never recoils from any consequences of a principle whatsoever, and which, in consequence of its being endowed in the highest degree with the faculty of generalizing ideas, is by consequence the best qualified to spread them abroad; for an idea is admitted by the greater number of people the more it is general, and the less it is local and narrow. It was therefore necessary that the philosophy of Locke should pass into France; it was there only

\* See note I.



that it bore its fruits; it was thence that it was spread over all Europe.

The philosophy of sensation appears in Locke still in a state of uncertainty; the English philosopher makes sensation act a very conspicuous part, but he still finds place for reflection. It was a Frenchman who gave to the philosophy of Locke its true character and its unity, by suppressing the insignificant part which Locke had left to reflection. Cordillac demonstrated that because reflection possesses, according to Locke's system, no energy properly belonging to it, no ideas, and no laws which it draws forth from its own ground, and which it adds to sensation and forces upon it; therefore such reflection was scarcely any thing else than sensation itself somewhat modified; he demonstrated that the different modes which, according to Locke, constitute all human faculties, were only different modes of sensation; so that sensation, whether in its primitive form of organic impression, or under the form of abstraction and generalization, is the sole element and even the sole instrument of knowledge. In fact, in Cordillac, sensation once given by the external world, becomes the sole administrator of affairs; it becomes, by means of certain circumstances, attention, comparison, and reasoning; it becomes the all of intelligence, and even the all of will; it becomes the all of consciousness, the whole soul

entirely. What then becomes of the soul? It becomes a collection of sensations, generalized or not generalized, but in either case without unity, without substance, and without causative energy. I designate the march of Cordillac, I do not criticise it; on the contrary, I pray you to remark the systematic boldness which was required in order to enable Cordillac to bring every thing back to sensation, and to push on the philosophy of Locke to its true and necessary consequences. Considered in this light, gentlemen, the *traité des sensations* is a monument truly historical. Cordillac had furnished the metaphysics of the philosophy of sensation; its moral system was yet wanting, and this want was supplied by Helvetius. Sensations, besides the character which they possess of referring or not referring to certain objects, besides their representative character, possess also an affective property; a property of being agreeable or disagreeable, of exciting pleasure or pain. Now then avoid all sensations that may give you pain, seek all that can afford you pleasure; and in this you behold the whole of morality in its most general principle. Saint Lambert has taken the pains of extracting from this principle the most positive applications, and of composing from them a veritable code, of which pleasure and voluptuousness constitute the foundation, and of which personal selfishness is the last corollary. Still more; it

was necessary that this morality should be politically applied; it has been so; and it has been declared, nay, even decreed, that as the individual has no law but his own interest, well or ill understood, and as collections of individuals could have no other, therefore those, more or less considerable, collections of individuals which are called nations, could have no law but their own will, that is, according to the reigning system, their own desires, that is, their good pleasure; and that the sovereignty of the people was consequently the only legitimate political dogma. The same system has been applied to all sciences, for instance to medicine; and as in metaphysics the I, or the soul, was considered as only a collection of our sensations, so, in physiology, life could be considered only as a collection of functions into unity. The harmony of all these functions must then indeed have appeared very strange; but all these difficulties were cleared at a flying leap, and medicine, too, has had an entirely empirical philosophy.

It was necessary that a school so complete, and of so clear and decided a character should also find a representative in history conformable to itself; and accordingly such an one was found. But the composition of a history of philosophy, renders an intimate acquaintance with literature and even with philology, which can be acquired only by persevering and laborious efforts, indispensably neces-

sary ; for nothing requires greater pains than the history of philosophy. You may judge what courage and patience men must possess, who immerse themselves in the study of ancient monuments written in learned languages, often half defaced by time, and so difficult to understand, that even at the present day, after a whole century of efforts skilfully directed, there still remains more than one important monument, which has not yet been deciphered and interpreted. You may judge of other difficulties. Indeed the history of philosophy is an immense undertaking ; and is it possible to engage in it, when we have arrived at a system which makes us despise all others ? I do not wish precisely to proclaim as a law, that the contempt of times which are past, necessarily engenders neglect and consequently ignorance of them, and that a system which resolves itself into the contempt of anterior systems cannot produce a history of philosophy ; I only remark as a fact, that the philosophy of sensation which belongs to England and France did not produce a history of philosophy in either of these countries ; for I do not call some assertions, which Cordillac has here and there let fall respecting certain systems, an history of philosophy ; nor do I any more apply the appellation of an history of philosophy to certain extracts which Diderot has been pleased to make from the excellent work of Brucker, and to which

he has added nothing but declamations or epigrams. This is not to write history, but to make a mockery of the labors of our fellow men. It was necessary that the system of sensation should pass into a country where habits of erudition and a taste for it prevail, in order to resolve itself into an history of philosophy; it was necessary that this system should pass into the country of Brucker. Doubtless the spirit of Germany is repugnant to the philosophy of sensation. Nevertheless this philosophy could not prevail in France without passing the Rhine, as it had passed the channel. It therefore met also in Germany with momentary success; but, as it is repugnant to the Germanic spirit, it could not there possess great representatives. It subjugated, however, ordinary spirits, and among them it found one who devoted his erudition and his science to the service of this philosophy. But you will remark that, to a man of true learning, too narrow a system is very inconvenient. How deeply soever we may be imbued with the exclusive idea that governs us, an intimate acquaintance with great masters who did not think as we do is a severe trial, and it often proves a wholesome remedy for systematic obstinacy. Plato and Aristotle, for instance, when we read them in their own language, and are consequently under the necessity of studying and reflecting upon them, disturb a little the exclusive point of view of sensa-

tion. We also find that the learned man who undertook to compose a history of philosophy considered in the point of view of sensation, precisely because his work was conscientiously performed, and because he really examined the great monuments of history, could not avoid abating somewhat of the rigor of his systematic point of view. His work may indeed be considered as that which best represents the point of view of sensation applied to the history of philosophy; but this point of view is much softened in passing through German erudition, and Tiedemann reminds us more of Locke than of Cordillac. Such is the character of the great work of Tiedemann. Thence all its merits; and thence all its defects.

The chief merit of Tiedemann is his perfect independence. The philosophy of sensation, a daughter of the Cartesian, separates also, and even rather too violently, philosophy from theology. This severity is, in all its rigor, discoverable in Tiedemann; there appears no longer even a trace of the slightest confusion. In the second place, Tiedemann is as learned as Brucker himself; he had read as much or perhaps more than he, and he had read more judiciously; as learned as his predecessor, he was a better critic. He is not satisfied with quoting his authorities; he also discusses their authenticity; he does not content himself with giving more or less extensive extracts

from philosophical monuments, he penetrates into their spirit, and the purpose of his work is to make it known to his readers; hence the title of his history: *Spirit of Speculative Philosophy*. Thirdly, Tiedemann, like Brucker, follows the order of chronology; but he also combines with it a more or less profound view of political history, from which Brucker was content to borrow his classifications. Brucker proceeds from political history in order to borrow from it the principal divisions of the history of philosophy commonly adopted, without searching for the relations that may really exist between the history of philosophy and general history. Tiedemann went much farther, and he always indicates the relations which connect the history of philosophy with the other branches of history. Finally, the work of Brucker, like all the works produced by Wolfianism, recommends itself by a high degree of apparent clearness, which only conceals real confusion. On the contrary, Tiedemann's theoretical point of view, being indeed confined, but special, determinate and precise, its application to history must, and really does, give to history the highest degree of precision.

The faults of Tiedemann are those of the school to which he belonged. First, Tiedemann separates, in the spirit of philosophic independence, philosophy from theology, and he is right in doing so; for these two things are essentially distinct; but

the fear of theology throws him into excessive and unnecessary scruples. It is true, and it is also my own opinion, that the East is much more mythological than philosophical, and that it is particularly thereby distinguished from the West; but it ought not to be absolutely said that the East contains no philosophy whatsoever, no trace of reflection; nevertheless Tiedemann is induced by the theological aspect which the East presents, to rescind it entirely from the history of philosophy, and he begins with Greece. Then Tiedemann, though an excellent critic, is too doubtful and skeptical; he is very right in discussing the authenticity of certain authorities, which before his time were too lightly admitted; but there are many works which Tiedemann believed to be apocryphical, which have now been fully proved to be authentic, or at least to contain in their general ideas, if not in their formal compilation, traditions which must be referred to those to whom these works were attributed. But Tiedemann's greatest fault is owing to the exclusive spirit which he carries with him into history. Though very learned, he is entirely modern; and he knows not how to enter into the spirit of ancient systems. For instance, the arguments which he ascribes to the dialogues of Plato are always misinterpretations; and we cannot help smiling when we see him apply to monuments such as these, the paltry measure of



Locke's philosophy, *paupertina philosophia*, as Leibnitz calls it.

One of the merits of Tiedemann, which I had forgotten to state, and am glad to recollect, is that he is progressive. Brucker scarcely seems to know whether philosophy, from its first appearance in the East to the present day, has gone forwards or backwards; whether it is now in a state of higher perfection than heretofore, whether it will be rendered more perfect hereafter, or whether future generations ought not rather to remain stationary at the very point at which the excellent Brucker and his master Wolf had stopped; while, on the contrary, Tiedemann believes in the perfectibility of human reason, and concludes his work by inviting the reader to hope and to confide in futurity. This is a real merit; but we must add that Tiedemann, though progressive, has not in any place attempted to determine the laws of the general progress of which he speaks; and consequently, though clear and precise in every particular part, he is obscure and vague in his general views; and, strictly speaking, he presents no general view of his subject, and therefore his work wants true order and a definite plan.

Such is the representative of the school of Locke in the history of philosophy; there now remains for me to designate to you the school opposed to it, and to show you how, proceeding upon an opposite

principle, and following it with the same consistency, it must have terminated in a history of philosophy totally opposite to the former.

It is incontestable, that in the bosom of consciousness there exists an order of phenomena which came from without, and which thought cannot refer to itself: this truth is represented by the philosophy of Locke; but it is not less true, that there exist in consciousness phenomena which cannot be accounted for by the former. I only indicate, I demonstrate nothing. It is to thought and not to sensation, that we must refer the idea of unity, the idea of necessity, of the infinite, of time, of space, &c.; for these are all ideas of which no conception whatever is possible. The phenomena of the multiple, of the variable, of the diverse, and of the finite, which are given by sensation, would not be conceivable, if other elements, namely, the ideas of unity, of the infinite, of substance, &c. were not borrowed from thought, which, being added to the phenomena of sensation, compose the totality of consciousness. This totality constitutes reality; but when reflection, which divides in order to elucidate, immerses itself in consciousness, and is struck with the impossibility of completing any conception whatsoever by means of exterior elements alone, and with the necessity of recurring to the internal elements of thought, it is so strongly impressed with the importance of

these internal elements, that its attention is concentrated upon them. We think only in consequence of possessing the power to think ; and even the external world is known to us, only because we possess the faculty of cognition, and the faculty of recognising what is general. This faculty, therefore, seems to constitute the faculty of exterior intuition itself. The case is the same in respect to our soul, in respect to God, and in respect to all things ; we can know nothing but by means of this faculty, and according to the laws of this faculty. Such is the natural and necessary origin of idealism. Idealism is that philosophy which, struck with the reality, the fecundity, and the independence of thought, of its laws, and of the ideas inherent in it, concentrates its attention upon these ideas alone, and beholds in them the principles of all things. Idealism is as true and was just as necessary as empiricism. Without empiricism we should never have known all that was contained in the bosom of sensation ; and without idealism we should never have known the power properly belonging to thought. In the same eighteenth century, which seemed totally occupied with sensation, idealism had also its place, and indeed its necessary place ; because it is not in the power of the human mind to resign its functions ; and when one school takes one aspect of consciousness for the whole of consciousness, there necessarily arises

another school which takes the opposite side, in order, I repeat it, that all the powers of the human soul may be known and developed.

It was in England that the philosophy of sensation made its first appearance; it was a part of Great Britain whence the first protestation against that philosophy went forth. I define the Scotch philosophy, gentlemen, as an honorable protestation against the extravagances of the last consequences of sensualism; for by this title it may justly claim the esteem of all good men. But Scotch philosophy advanced no farther on its new road, than Locke had advanced in his own. The efforts of the Scotch school were confined to the purpose of retrieving and of vindicating some forgotten elements of human nature; and also of restoring to the honorable station properly belonging to them, some of the fundamental ideas of reason, which it has incontestably described by the characters, which, at the present day, they are perceived to possess; but it did not even seek to account for them, to trace them to their origin, or to follow them in their legitimate applications. It possesses an incipient psychology, but no regular logic; it possesses no real metaphysics, no philosophy of God, no cosmology; it treats, to a certain extent, of morals and political institutions, but it possesses, properly speaking, no philosophical system, either of morals or of the principles of gov-

ernment. The merits of the Scotch philosophers, as those of Locke, are good sense and clearness; their defects are also the same as those of Locke, viz. the absence of speculative energy, the want of extension of thought, of strictness and of precision. Such a school could consequently, without even mentioning the complete want of erudition, produce no history of philosophy. Good sense is at once the basis of science, and the point to which science must return. But we must not confound simple good sense with science, that is, with the unlimited developement of reflection in every sense, and without any other bounds than those of the energies of our nature. It is by common sense, that mankind, without scientific efforts, repel the invasion of materialism; it is by a generous instinct of common sense, that souls of a certain temper escape from the philosophy of sensation; in short, as I said before, common sense is the point of departure of science, but it is not science itself. As the philosophy of sensation invented by Locke could not, while remaining in the hands of an Englishman, arrive at its entire developement; so neither could the palid idealism of the Scotch school, receive from the prudent and timid instruction of the worthy professors of Edinburgh, that manly and brilliant character, which was required to draw upon it the attention of Europe, and to enable it to engage,

upon an extensive theatre, in a successful conflict with the seductions and genius of the opposite school. In short, as it was necessary that the philosophy of Locke, to make its fortune, should cross the Channel; so it was also necessary for idealism to pass into a country different from Scotland, in order to prosper there, and to display the power and the fecundity of its principles.

In France, it was represented by two men, of which the first was M. Turgot; who was withdrawn at an early hour from philosophy by politics, and entered only into partial conflicts without eclat, against the consequences of the philosophy of Cordillac: the other was rather a literary character than a philosopher; and sometimes the accomplice, and at other times the adversary of the reigning philosophy, he exhausted his strange genius, in sentimental protestations, which do not appertain even to the history of science. You may perceive that I am speaking of Rousseau.

It was reserved to Germany, that land of earnest meditation, which had already produced Leibnitz and Wolf, to give to idealism its true representative in the eighteenth century; and this representative is the illustrious Kant. Kant, as Locke, is a disciple of Descartes; he bears the same general character and uses the same method as Locke; for this character and this method must for ever remain the character and method of modern philosophy.

Kant separates with a steady hand philosophy from theology ; his arguments proceed from the analysis of consciousness ; only he attaches himself to the element opposite to that of Locke. All the difference between them lies there. The great work undertaken by Kant was a critical examination of independent thought in respect to all things ; his glory is a complete system of the statistics, and of the interior laws, of thought. He does not rest satisfied with indicating these laws ; he penetrates to the bottom of them, and follows them into all the spheres of thought ; he enumerates, he describes, and he classifies them.

*Apparet domus intus. . . . .*

Kant is the true founder of rational psychology ; but he was not a man to stop there. Having thus enumerated, classified, and described the laws of thought, Kant asks how, from these laws which properly belong to thought, we may arrive in a legitimate manner at the knowledge of the existence of the exterior world, of God, of any existence besides our own, of the existence of real objects ; but we believe in them only by giving credence to the laws of our own understanding ; therefore though this credence be necessary within the sphere of psychology, yet, as it reposes upon a basis which is altogether subjective, it contains, when extended beyond the limits of consciousness and applied to external objects, a paralogism, a vicious circle.

Kant has almost entirely rescinded ontology from philosophy; in consequence of having dwelt in the depths of thought, he seems to have considered it as the only real world; he has aggrandized psychology, but he makes it almost the whole of philosophy. Thence a doctrine concerning God which is sublime, but which rests upon no other foundation than that of subjective and consequently personal faith. Hence his system of morals is concentrated in the intention; in jurisprudence he has established the rights of persons upon a more solid foundation than real rights; in aesthetics the beautiful and the sublime are considered almost exclusively in their relations to man as the centre and measure of all things; finally, his cosmology and his philosophy of nature, are nothing but a transfer by induction of the subjective laws of thought into external nature. Fichte has, with greater consistency, gone still farther than his master. In Kant the point of view from which the thinking subject considers objects, depends upon its own nature. In Fichte every object, being in respect to the subject nothing but what the subject causes it to be, is nothing but an induction of that subject, that is, the subject itself, that is, the me; and thus the me is no longer considered merely as the measure, but as the principle of all things. Here, then, we behold the idealism of Kant, already in itself so very subjective, becoming,



according to Fichte, absolutely subjective. God was, according to Kant, a necessary conception of thought, the object of an invincible belief of the soul. According to Fichte, God is nothing but the subject of thought conceived as absolute; he is therefore still the I. But as it is repugnant to human thought, gentlemen, that the I of man, which might indeed be transferred into nature, should be imposed upon God, Fichte distinguishes between a twofold I, the one phenomenal, namely, the I which each of us represents; the other is itself the substance of the I, namely, God himself.\* God is the absolute I. When we have arrived thus far we are arrived at the last terminus of subjective idealism; as the philosophy of sensation is arrived at its last terminus when it has gone to the length of asserting that the soul is only a collection of our sensations, that God is only a general abstract idea, which in its last analysis is perceived to be representable by all particular ideas of sensation, that is, by sensations. The philosophy of Kant and of Fichte absorbs consciousness and thereby all things into thought; as the philosophy of Locke and of Cordillac absorbs consciousness and thereby all things into sensation; and again as sensualism, when arrived at the last consequences, at the very extravagance of baseness, destroys itself; so it was also necessary that idealism should

\* See note J.

arrive at its most sublime extravagance in order to meet its ruin. But before it disappeared, this noble and energetic doctrine could not fail to produce its representation in the history of philosophy ; and as the condition of erudition was superabundantly fulfilled in Germany, the great philosophic movement of Kant and Fichte found easily a worthy representative in a skilful and learned man who composed, in the point of view of the critical philosophy, an history of philosophy as much opposed to that of Tiedemann as the subjective idealism of Kant is opposed to the empiricism and to the sensualism of Cordillac and of Locke : this man is the celebrated Tennemann.

The general character of Tennemann's work is to reproduce the philosophy of Kant in the history of philosophy. The philosophy of Kant is profoundly Cartesian ; it separates philosophy from theology, and admits of no other method than that of psychology. Tennemann, therefore, separates philosophy from theology in history with quite as much rigor as Tiedemann ; and besides, he carries his scruples on that score as far as his predecessor. This is his first merit ; the second is that idealism, considered as an exclusive system, being infinitely more wide than empiricism, Tennemann was able, in applying it to all the great monuments of philosophy, to embrace a greater number of them, and to comprehend and appreciate them better ; his his-

torical point of view is therefore more comprehensive and less negative. Then Tennemann is quite as learned and quite as critical as Tiedemann; but he is less skeptical, and he therefore restores to many works their authenticity, which his predecessor had attacked. His expositions of the different systems are at once more extensive and equally faithful; the spirit of each system is seized upon with equal sagacity, and the general views are there sustained by developements by which they are confirmed and elucidated. Finally, Tennemann is more progressive; he connects more closely the history of the philosophy of every epoch with its general history; clearness and precision shine in his work not less than in Tiedemann's, or they may even be said to shine there still more; and a better, a less exterior, and a less arbitrary arrangement gives to the whole work a more philosophic character. By indicating the general ideas which have been predominant in the different epochs, and by expressing them in the forms properly belonging to the science of which he writes the history, namely, to metaphysics, Tennemann has prepared the way for that superior point of view which beholds in history nothing but ideas, their succession, their conflict, and, in spite of apparent disorder, their regular developement; and which consequently regards history as a real system, and a true and entire philosophy. Doubtless

Tennemann's view of the philosophic movement of history was rather vague, and his success in making it apparent was not great; yet nevertheless he evidently saw it; and herein consists, perhaps, his greatest merit. His wrong views are occasioned by having borrowed the frame of his work and his point of view from a system not sufficiently extensive to embrace all systems, and to give an account of all of them without disfiguring any. The philosophy of Kant, when compared with that of Cordillac, is vast; but the spirit of man is still more vast, and the innumerable systems which it has disseminated in the course of so many centuries, appears somewhat straitened and ill at ease within the circle of the Kantian philosophy. Because Tennemann regards all things with the eyes of Kant, he does not see every thing; and what he does not comprehend he criticises, which is much more easy; he is exclusive, in an opposite sense of the word, when applied to Tiedemann, but yet he too is exclusive, and consequently unjust. Moreover, he is not only exclusive but sufficiently pedantic. We must not forget that Kant, as well as Wolf, was a professor; he had in his youth passed through the school of Wolf, where he had acquired, with a taste for geometry and for the exact sciences, that of an inflexible formalism, the dread of mysticism, the love of a precision carried even to dryness, the habitual use of didactic order, and of a

language fixed and profoundly determinate, which often leads him into a terminology more precise than elegant, which is indeed very commodious for instruction, but destitute of all that can render it pleasing; and which is therefore better adapted to the school, than to the world. Kant's ideas possess a very high degree of precision; but the etiquette with which he introduces them, the forms under which he presents them, are terrifying to the profane, and rather so, even to men of his own craft. Yet all this may pass, in a speculative theory, published by the author himself; but you may conceive the effects of formulæ, the one, in spite, or rather on account of its precision and rigor, more strange than the other, when applied to an entire history of philosophy, with that harshness and want of taste, with which scholars always apply the doctrine of their masters. Tennemann applies the philosophy of Kant, as if it were the bed of Procrustes, upon which he stretches every system that occurs to him; and whenever they either exceed, or fall short of the measure, the loyal Kantian breaks out into exclamations and complaints, which are abundantly ridiculous, and particularly so, when systems are in question which are far superior to the measure applied to them. Hence the Stoics are treated in a masterly manner; but Plato much less so; and the New Platonists, who escape on all sides

from the critical philosophy, totally disconcert the learned historian, who tries hard to discard them at once, by a preliminary examination, as downright mad men; nevertheless, the conscientiousness of the scholar at length prevails, and an extensive volume is devoted to the neoplatonic school; but then the philosopher revenges himself by abusing them beyond measure. Tennemann is, so to speak, in chase of the critical philosophy and psychology; he travels through all centuries in search of them. The mere shadow of mysticism affrights him; and whenever he perceives in any system the slightest appearance of it, we may be sure to see a hailstorm of arguments and Kantian formulæ arise and discharge itself upon that unhappy system. This mania spoils a little the great and estimable work of Tennemann, and makes its perusal less agreeable than that of Tiedemann, to which in other respects it is far preferable. The last contrast between these two historians reminds us again of the remarkable contrast between their masters; of whom the one, though infinitely more precise and more positive than the other, possesses a clearness much less popular.

Such are the two histories of philosophy which were necessarily produced by the two great systems whose conflict filled the latter part of the eighteenth century. Tiedemann and Tennemann represent this conflict in the history of philosophy. Such is

the present state of things ; such is the inheritance which the eighteenth century has bequeathed to the nineteenth. Such was, and such must necessarily have been, the result of the century which is no more. What will be that of the century now in progress ? What work will be accomplished by the nineteenth century ? What are my own projects and hopes ? This will be the subject of the next and last lecture.

## LECTURE XIII.

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### CONTENTS.

Present state of the history of philosophy; works of detail. Necessity of a new general history of philosophy. Condition: a new philosophical movement. Determination of the character of this new movement: eclecticism. Symptoms of eclecticism in European philosophy. Roots of eclecticism in the state of society in Europe, and particularly in France. Analysis of the Charte. Necessary consequences of the reign of the Charte, even on the character of philosophy. The correspondent character which the history of philosophy ought to assume. The character and intention of this course of lectures. Conclusion.

GENTLEMEN, —

**TIEDEMANN** and **Tennemann** close the eighteenth century. **Tiedemann's** work appeared from 1791 to 1797; **Tennemann's** from 1798 to 1820. Since then no considerable work has appeared in Germany on the history of philosophy; at least none that has excited general attention; no revival of **Tiedemann** and **Tennemann** in the person of a new historian has yet taken place. And as, after **Herder**, universal histories of humanity were succeeded by partial histories of certain nations, of certain epochs, and of certain branches of civilization, so, also, after the appearance of the two great works into which the philosophy of the eighteenth



century resolved itself, the universal history of philosophy was succeeded by profound treatises containing partial researches concerning certain schools and certain systems. From the nature of things, these researches now accumulating, must soon render a new universal history desirable. Thus science advances; it goes on from partial works to collective works, and from collective works to partial ones; from decomposition to recomposition; such is the continual movement of science. In Germany, and in all the world, the present movement is that of decomposition. The existence of this movement derives its necessity from the general order of scientific labor in every century; and its incontestable utility is already apparent in its results. Never did any quarter of a century produce so many ingenious and substantial works, or prepare such rich materials, for the generalizations of genius. We are warranted in saying that in our days only the philosophy of India commences to be known, and to go forth from the mythological veils that have hitherto enveloped it. The illustrious president of the Asiatic society of London, Colebrook, has at length, from 1824 to 1825, furnished European criticism with the only solid foundations it yet possesses, upon which our knowledge of the philosophic systems of India may be safely grounded. It was in 1826 that M. William de Humboldt furnished his profound

analysis of the philosophical episode of the Mahabharat, which is called the Bhagavad-Gita. The ingenious author of the memoir on Lao-Tseu continues his elegant inquiries concerning the Chinese philosophy. If our century may be said to have actually discovered oriental philosophy, it may be also said to have almost renovated the knowledge we already possessed of the philosophic antiquity of Greece, by introducing into it criticism. Among the works and the names which present themselves in great abundance, I shall only mention those of my three honorable and learned friends, M.M. Schleyermacher, Brandis, and Creutzer, to whom the philosophy of Plato, that of Aristotle, and that of Alexandria, are so much indebted. Not Germany alone has rendered services to ancient philosophy; also Holland has not ceased, since Vyttenbach, to contribute, in many valuable treatises, her quota to philosophical erudition. Let us hope that France will not always remain a stranger to this useful movement. The academy of inscriptions and of belles lettres has already, in its prize essays and programmes, called the attention and excited the emulation of our countrymen to the investigation of many points of the history of ancient philosophy, as much neglected as they are important; I must particularly mention the last programme on the school of Alexandria; a programme which, if I may be permitted to say so, would gain in utility,

and would answer the purpose of the learned society better if it were restricted within narrower limits, and embraced fewer centuries and fewer questions. Nor has the philosophy of the middle ages wanted ingenious interpreters; and if I am less willing to stop to consider them, it is solely because this part of the history of philosophy, though equally as rich and interesting as any other, requires less erudition; and because its criticism is more easy. We have gone forth from the middle ages, and we comprehend them almost without an effort. The true theatre for displaying the labors of the historian, and the true field of battle for erudition and criticism is, and ever will be, classical antiquity. It is there that a civilization entirely foreign to us, that forms of religion, arts and governments, totally different from ours, that considerable vacant interstices, the loss of many important monuments, the defaced condition of the small number that still subsist, the difficulty of the idioms in which they are written, the profound difference of the ideas and the foreign aspect of the forms in which they appear, present obstacles to the historian, which can be surmounted only by indefatigable perseverance, by an erudition embracing the most minute particulars, by the most circumspect criticism, and the greatest acuteness and versatility of intellect. It was there, also, that the three great historians of philosophy, Brucker, Tiedemann, and Tennemann,

were formed. It is there that, at the present day, all those who devote their lives to the study of philosophy meet each other, as it were, by appointment. Whoever has not served his apprenticeship there, and has not dwelt long in classic antiquity, amidst manuscripts and texts, and even amidst philosophical discussions, cannot possibly have acquired the tact of criticism; and must consequently be unqualified to write a general history of philosophy, founded upon a perfect knowledge of the cases which he must be called upon to decide. It is on this account that I do not hesitate to exhort those of my young hearers who may feel inclined to study the history of philosophy, to concentrate for some time their studies on philosophical antiquity. For my own part, if I may be permitted to cite my own example, notwithstanding the general views contained in my philosophical works, I have never ceased, for the last twelve years, to be assiduously employed in studying, not only the principal epochs of ancient philosophy, but the particular systems of which each epoch and each school is composed. For I am perfectly convinced that particularly there it is necessary unceasingly to combine the most profound study of details with the generalization of ideas; and that partial researches wisely combined and intimately united are alone able to lead to results as substantial as they are extensive.

Such, gentlemen, is the present state of the history of philosophy; this state is necessary and it is good, but perhaps it may not endure forever: and as every precipitate generalization leads to the necessity of a complete decomposition; so, also, it is impossible that a vast decomposition should not soon terminate in a new recomposition; and that so many skilful and profound researches should not sooner or later engender a new universal history of philosophy.

But, gentlemen, upon what condition can this new history be expected to arise? Although partial researches are the materials necessary for the composition of an history of philosophy, yet it is not erudition but philosophy that must raise the structure. It was the Cartesian philosophy that produced Brucker; it was the philosophy of Locke that produced Tiedemann; and it was the philosophy of Kant that produced Tennemann; so, also, at the present day, nothing but the breath of life proceeding from the inspiration of a new philosophic movement can, by entering into all these partial researches, and into all these sure and certain, but apparently confined and sterile results of erudition, render them prolific, and thus productive of an universal history. Now what is, what must be the quality of this new spirit, of this new philosophy which alone can renovate the history of philosophy? Such is the question proposed; in

order to solve it we must consider the actual position of philosophy at the present day.

The philosophy which preceded that of Descartes was theology. The philosophy of Descartes is the separation of philosophy from theology ; it is, so to speak, the introduction of philosophy upon the theatre of the world under its own name. The philosophy of the eighteenth century is the development of the Cartesian movement in two great systems in opposition to each other, which the Cartesian system contained in its bosom, but without having developed all their powers. It was necessary that these hidden powers should be fully developed that they might be known, both in respect to what they contain, and in respect to what they do not contain. Hence the idealism of the German school, and the sensualism of England and France. In respect to sensualism none can flatter himself to go beyond the eighteenth century in England and in France. Take it at its point of departure in Locke ; follow it even to our own days in its last representatives ; and you will perceive that this great movement is deficient in nothing : it possesses a system of psychology, of metaphysics, of morals, and of politics, as well as natural and medical sciences, an history of humanity, and an history of philosophy. All that a great philosophical movement can produce, sensualism has at the present day produced already ; nothing

remains but to adopt it entirely, and to receive it once for all such as it is, or perhaps to discover some pitiful new modes of applying it. Hence we cannot but conclude that a philosophy, of which nothing can be expected for the future but a monotonous repetition of the past, and whose continuance would suppose that the human mind had stopped short in its progress at the commencement of the nineteenth century, must have come to its end. On the other hand, who can flatter himself, in point of idealism, to go beyond the system of Fichte? Idealism, yet weak, but sufficiently manifest in the subjective laws of Kant's philosophy, arrived at its last terminus in the absolute subjectivity of the I in Fichte. And as this philosophy has attained to all the developement of which it can possibly be susceptible, as it already possesses its psychology, its metaphysics, its ontology, its morals, its politics, and its history of humanity and of philosophy, nothing great can yet be added to it, and nothing more remains for it to do than for the sensualism of Locke; namely, to rest where it is, and, as it were, to fall asleep there, as if it were arrived at the last boundary of thought; as if all truths having, at that point of space and time which we have reached, been finally revealed to the mind of man, it were in future needless to search beyond them for any more.

You are now to decide whether you will rest

satisfied with either the one or the other of these exclusive systems, and thus condemn your own thought to eternal immobility, or whether, as I rather think that humanity and the world show no inclination to remain stationary at the end of the eighteenth century, you wish to pass beyond the systems of Kant and of Locke, and to seek some other system. But you may seek as much as you please; you may study, penetrate into, and compare all the systems which have appeared in the course of three thousand years, and you will find none of them which in their ultimate analysis are not reducible to those two which you have been rejecting, to idealism and to sensualism; so that you can neither abide by either of these two systems nor escape from both. If, then, it has been proved on the one hand, that neither the one nor the other of these two systems can be regarded as the result of the last effort of the human mind; and if on the other hand, it has been also proved that not a single other system is given which is not reducible either to the one or to the other of these two; what is to be done? Being thus hedged in by the necessity of either choosing between two opposite systems of which both are bad, or of tormenting ourselves in vain to find a new system, which would nevertheless be either the one or the other of them more or less modified; we arrive, in extricating ourselves from this dilemma, at the only



possible solution which yet remains, and which consists in the combination of these contrary systems, by rejecting all the exclusive views which we cannot admit, and by reconciling all the truths which they contain, which can be done only by regarding them in a point of view which, being more comprehensive than that of either the one or the other system, may be capable of including, and thus of explaining and completing them both. You may perceive the tendency of my discourse. After the subjective idealism of the school of Kant, and the empiricism and sensualism of that of Locke, have been developed and their last possible results exhausted, no new combination is in my opinion possible but the union of these two systems by centering them both in a vast and powerful eclecticism.

Eclecticism ! this name, which, whether chosen well or ill, begins for some time since to be somewhat spread abroad and to resound in France and elsewhere, recalls, involuntarily, my recollection to a time now long gone by, when, for the first time, it was pronounced in this chair without eclat and without echo, amidst the obscurity of the timid essays of my first instruction. It was about 1816 or 1817, that tormenting myself with continual efforts made in various directions to discover all that is contained in consciousness, and to grasp it in its whole extent, I arrived at the conclusion that

there exist in consciousness vastly more phenomena than mankind had hitherto thought of; that in fact all these phenomena are really opposed, the one to the other; but that, in thus appearing to exclude each other, they nevertheless, each of them, retain in consciousness their respective place. I do not now precisely recollect what phenomena were at that moment the subject of my inquiries. Entirely occupied with the method of psychology, and at that time immersed in pursuits requiring the most minute investigations, my thoughts on this subject scarcely went beyond the limits of a few very crude observations, and very circumspect inductions; but by degrees the scene became more extensive; and from psychology, which is the vestibule, and, if we may so express ourselves, the antechamber of science, we reached the sanctuary itself, that is, metaphysics. Gentlemen, the human mind is given. It desires not only to know what is passing on the front scenes of consciousness, in the first plane of thought; but also to be made acquainted with what is contained in its depths; man wishes to know all that can be known of himself, of the world, and of God. How elevated soever, certain problems may be, they are problems proposed to the mind of man; and to evade them is neither possible nor lawful. It was therefore my duty to engage successively in different attempts to solve them; and what in 1816 or 1817 was but a feeble and

palid trial to effect a reconciliation between the elements enclosed within the narrow circle of psychology, became gradually a more extensive and significant project, and finally a real theory, embracing together with psychology, metaphysics, logic, the whole of ontology, and a part of cosmology ; it is this theory, firmly established and developed, which still presides over my instruction. In fact, what is the philosophy that I teach, but respect for all the elements of humanity and for all things ! Our philosophy, gentlemen, is not a melancholy and fanatical philosophy, which, being prepossessed with a few exclusive ideas, undertakes to reform all others upon the same model ; it is a philosophy essentially optimistical, whose only end is to comprehend all, and which, therefore, accepts and reconciles all. It seeks to obtain power only by extension ; its unity consists only in the harmony of all contrarieties. Thus, in respect to its method, it retains undoubtedly, as a conquest of the century to which it belongs, the taste of researches *a posteriori*, observation and induction, joined with observation, and finally analysis ; but it does not reject the ancient synthesis, and it gives to analysis the support of a primitive synthesis, which becoming its basis furnishes it with a substantial subject of inquiry. If analysis were to be regarded as the only point of departure of a method, that method could arrive only at

decompositions; and consequently it could terminate only in a generalization more or less elevated, but without any real unity; that it may arrive at a real and substantial unity it is necessary that it should have gone forth from a real and substantial unity, from which it can have departed only in order to be decomposed and brought to light. You have seen that we have always appealed to the authority of those general beliefs which constitute the common sense of mankind; and doubtless we must commence with propositions of common sense, and we must return to common sense, on pain of being deemed extravagant. But though common sense be the starting point and the necessary termination of all sound philosophy, it does not constitute the process of philosophy; and science is far from being complete when common beliefs are firmly established; it is still necessary for it to penetrate into their secret, to discover their origin, and to determine their reach. The process of philosophy consists in the unlimited use of reflection, and in the prosecution of indefatigable researches concerning the last consequences to which free speculation may lead.

In psychology, we have found in consciousness not only the me, or voluntary and free activity, with the whole retinue of facts which depend upon it, but also another element which is not the effect of the liberty of man, and which it cannot refer to

itself, namely, sensation; a phenomenon which, in its relation to the me, as the centre and subject of consciousness, appears as something external and foreign to it, and with a totally impersonal character, on which account the name of not-me has been given to it: but neither the passive and fatal not-me, nor the voluntary and free me, explain the whole of consciousness; for if we look beyond the opposite phenomena of the me and the not-me, which are condemned to live together, reason, which is the light of consciousness, reveals to man the existence of being in itself, of substance, of absolute cause, of that which is necessary, infinite, &c., in fact, God himself. Being, the me, and the not-me, are three indestructible elements of consciousness; not only do we find them in the actual developement of consciousness, but we find them in the first facts of consciousness as in the last; and so intimately are they combined with each other that if you destroy but one of these three elements you destroy all the rest. There you behold eclecticism within the limits of consciousness, in its elements, which are all equally real, but which, to form a psychological theory, need all to be combined with each other. Even logic demands eclecticism. We have seen that the two fundamental laws of logic are the finite and the infinite, the contingent and the necessary, the relative and the absolute, &c.; in its last analysis the

idea of cause and the idea of substance. All systems of logic turn upon the one or upon the other of these two ideas. But they must be united; we must necessarily conceive that every cause supposes a substance, a substratum, a basis of action; and every substance contains necessarily a principle of developement, that is, a cause. The substance is the foundation of the cause, and the cause is the form of the substance; the first idea is not the second; but the second is inseparable from the first, as the first from the second. Thence, gentlemen, in metaphysics and in ontology, the necessity of connecting the idea of God with that of the world, and the impossibility of reducing the one to the other. If we consider God as an indivisible substance, as the infinite in itself without any relation to the finite, as the absolute without any relation to the relative, as being without any relation to manifestation and to appearance, we at bottom deny his causality and his power; we destroy the possibility of humanity, and the possibility of nature. On the other hand, if we immerse ourselves exclusively in the idea of the cause, of the operative cause, that is, in the contingent, and in that which is apparent; and if we refuse to go beyond it, we stop at the form of things, and fail to perceive their real essence and principle. Thence the two great systems which at the present day are distinguished by the names of theism and pantheism. Both the

one and the other are equally exclusive and false ; theism without pantheism is a dead religion which forgets precisely the fundamental attribute of God, namely, power, action, and all that is thence derived. On the other hand, pantheism is indeed in possession of all observable and visible reality, and of its immediate laws ; but it misconceives the very principle of this reality, and the first and last reason of these laws. Thus we behold on all sides diverse methods and diverse systems, in psychology, in logic, and in metaphysics ; on all sides opposition and contradiction, error and truth, both together. The only solution of these contradictions is given by the harmony of contrarieties ; it is the only method of escaping from error and yet retaining all real truths.

When we have come to these results, then, and only then, may we think of a history of philosophy. Suppose that we had not come thus far, but had stopped at psychology, for instance ; we should then evidently be unprepared to enter upon the history of philosophy. I have already observed that the spirit of man contains within itself certain problems, which its great interpreters have endeavored to solve ; and of the solution of these problems the history of philosophy must consist. Now if you have rescinded or eluded these problems how will you be able to understand the solutions given of them by different masters ? How will you be

able to judge of Plato, of Aristotle, or of Leibnitz ? You will find it impossible ; and nothing will remain for you but to bid adieu to the history of philosophy, or, what would be much worse, to treat it lightly ; both the one and the other are equally unworthy of the nineteenth century. It is therefore absolutely necessary, after having gone to the very end of psychology, to go beyond it ; to enter into ontology, into metaphysics, and into logic ; and to form a system that shall be able to account for all the requisites of thought, and thus possess the power of reckoning also with other systems, of interrogating them, and judging of them. You may now, gentlemen, perceive the reason why, though the chair entrusted to me is a chair of the history of philosophy, they who have followed my lectures from 1815 to 1816 may have remarked that, without entirely neglecting the history of philosophy, I have been more occupied with settling my own ideas than with judging of those of others. It was only about 1819 that, the system of eclecticism which had commenced to be formed about 1816, having gone through and embraced all the different branches of philosophy, and having finally assumed a systematic character, I applied it regularly to the history of philosophy, commencing with the best known and most modern systems. Since that time my labors have never forsaken, nor will they ever cease to follow this direction. It is



the only one which appears to me capable of leading to new and satisfactory results, either in speculative philosophy or in history. When, neither in consciousness, nor in things, nor in ourselves, nor in nature, nor in God, we reject any real elements that are presented to us, we need not in history to proscribe any of the great systems which are there recorded, and which however exclusive and defective they may be, must necessarily all be borrowed from some real element; for there exists not a system absolutely chimerical. Eclecticism is therefore transferable from philosophy itself to the history of philosophy; it renovates the history of philosophy, as it renovates philosophy itself. Such is the twofold reformation which I have undertaken both in the one and in the other, and which constitutes the character of my instruction and the last aim of all my labors.

But am I not perhaps pursuing a chimera? Is not eclecticism a well meant reverie, born in my own mind, condemned to die there, and to accomplish its whole destiny there? Or has this dream a chance of being realized, and does there even now appear a symptom which encourages us to hope that we behold in it the germ of futurity? In other words, what is in Europe at the present day the tendency of philosophy?

You know that it was from England and from Scotland that, in the eighteenth century, the first

rays of sensualism and of idealism went forth. Now England has, strictly speaking, for some time past, and I might almost say for the last half century, not contributed her share to the philosophical researches of civilized Europe; no celebrated work on metaphysics has been published in England. Remark, gentlemen, that I do not say no work of any merit; I do not here take upon myself the office of a judge; I believe glory to be a very good judge; I interrogate it, and it does not present to me any work of English philosophy which has excited to a certain degree the attention of Europe. Besides, the Scotch school, this honorable protestation of common sense against the extravagances of the sensualism of Locke, the Scotch school, after having gone through a wise and useful career, more wise and more useful than brilliant, enfeebled and exhausted since Reid, has just been almost totally extinguished in the person of the ingenious Dugald Stewart, whose recent loss philosophy deploras. We may say that England and Scotland, which have always exerted a very feeble influence on European philosophy, have now ceased to exert upon it any influence whatsoever.

The two great philosophical nations of Europe are at present Germany and France. The nations of the south, either still remain in the bonds of the theology of the seventeenth century, or they

follow in the train of France. France governs the south of Europe; and what is somewhat the past of France, is always the present among the select orders of the inhabitants of Portugal, of Spain and of Italy. These fine countries, are in general, and particularly in philosophy, what France makes them. Their present is the past of France; the future of France will determine their future prospects. As the south is represented by France, so the north is represented by Germany. In fact, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, and the most civilized parts of Austria and Russia follow the movement of Germany. The same distance is preserved between the further end of the north of Europe and Germany, as between France and the further end of the south of Europe. The French and German nations therefore appear alone upon the theatre of Europe. The question of the present state of European philosophy then resolves itself into the question, what is the position of philosophy in Germany and in France. With the eighteenth century it terminated in Germany in the most exclusive idealism, and in France in the most exclusive sensualism. What is now become of idealism in Germany, and of sensualism in France? Such is the question; let us interrogate facts. Let me ask whether it is not a fact of public notoriety that the philosophy of Locke, of Cordillac, of Helvetius, of Saint Lambert, &c., which heretofore

reigned without contradiction, has during the last fifteen years been attacked in France by adversaries, of whom you may judge as you please, but whose number has been in fact incessantly increasing? We must not forget, gentlemen, that the first remonstrances against the philosophy of the eighteenth century were made from two chairs of the faculty of literature. M. Laromiguière, in separating attention from sensation, established already a fruitful distinction. The superior good sense and the manly dialectics of M. Royer-Colard struck at the philosophy of sensation still more forcible blows; my illustrious predecessor had the honor of being the first who introduced into France the wise doctrines of the Scotch philosophy. A man who is no more, who may justly be called the greatest metaphysician that has honored France since Malebranche, and who was almost totally unacquainted with the contemporaneous works of Germany, was led gradually by the instinct of superior sagacity from metamorphosis to metamorphosis, until he arrived at a point of view to which nothing is wanted but more consistency, more amplitude, and more boldness, to make it resemble Fichte's. At a great distance from sensation M. de Biran has sought the origin of the most elevated ideas which at present are in consciousness, in the depths of that voluntary and free activity which constitutes all personality. He has

reestablished the authority of these ideas, and instead of borrowing them from any thing without us, or from the external world, he has drawn them forth from the me itself, in order to transfer them afterwards into nature by virtue of an induction of which the manifest subjectivity seems to be an enfeebled reflex of the subjective and personal idealism of Fichte. Finally M. Degenerando, has in the second edition of the *Systèmes Comparés de Philosophie*, commenced to show more favor than heretofore to idealistic theories, which had hitherto been held in contempt, and which seem astonished to find interest and equity for them on the part of a French philosopher. Why should I not add, that from the Normal school there are gone forth scholars who now are masters, and who, by their lectures and publications, have increased and spread abroad the new philosophical movement? Upon the whole it is incontestable that in the face of Cordillac's philosophy there has now arisen a new philosophy much more idealistical.

Now pass the Rhine, and what do you behold in Germany? Does the absolute dominion of the subjective idealism of Kant and Fichte still continue there? No, gentlemen; Fichte died in 1815, and even before his death a new philosophy, unable to stop at the system of absolute subjectivity, and, as it were, to remain stationary at the summit of the pyramid of the me, has redescended

to the earth, and returned to nearer views of actual reality. The contemporaneous German philosophy, which now exerts as great an influence, and possesses as high an authority in Germany, as ever did that of Kant and Fichte, bears the title of the philosophy of nature. This title alone sufficiently indicates some return towards reality; and as France no longer considers it derogatory to her glory, to seek inspirations from the philosophy of Germany, so neither is it altogether a patriotic illusion which induces me to believe, that the most illustrious representatives of the philosophy of nature, take an interest in the progress of the new French philosophy, and that Munich and Berlin, no longer view Paris with contempt.

What does this mean, gentlemen? Germany that looked down with contempt upon France, now takes notice of her; France that was in a manner isolated from the rest of Europe, turns her eyes towards Germany. To subject idealism, a philosophy has succeeded in Germany, which glories in the appellation of the philosophy of nature; and in France, if not on the ruins, yet in the face of sensualism, a new philosophy arises, to which a decided character, of idealism and spiritualism cannot be refused. What are we to conclude from all these changes? We are to conclude, that the reign of the exclusive systems of sensualism in France, and of subjective ideal-

ism in Germany, are passed; and that French philosophy by its new idealism, and German philosophy by the doctrine of nature, aspire to meet, and to join hands with each other; and that, in this still feeble mingling of idealism and realism, a true eclecticism is silently forming in European philosophy. Thus, to judge from symptoms by no means equivocal, futurity seems in Europe to appertain to a philosophical system\* very different from either of the two exclusive philosophies whose conflict filled the eighteenth century. Now if the new philosophical movement, which is silently gaining ground in Europe, should prove to be an eclectic movement, it follows that eclecticism must be the basis of the new history of philosophy; because an infallible law requires that every philosophy, which in its turn becomes predominant, after having finished its theoretical development, must look back towards former ages, must interrogate them in its own spirit, and terminate in an history of philosophy conformable to itself. These considerations seem alone sufficiently to justify our present enterprise. The roots of this new philosophy are deeper still.

The history of philosophy in a given epoch is necessarily relative to the state of speculative philosophy in the same epoch. This point is incontestable. It is also evident that the state of specu-

\* See note K.

lative philosophy in an epoch is equally relative to the general state of society in that epoch. It has been demonstrated in this place that in the regular developement of the different elements of which the interior life of a people is composed, namely, industry, the state, art, religion, and philosophy, philosophy is the last effort, and the summary of the harmonious developement of the anterior elements. This, I hope, has been placed beyond a doubt; let us then apply this principle to the question now before us. I have shown you that a new history of philosophy must necessarily result from the partial works which on all sides are now in process; that this history of philosophy must necessarily assume the character of that speculative philosophy which is called to reign in France as well as in Germany; and that the character already assumed by this nascent philosophy is eclecticism. We must now show that this new philosophy, which already manifests itself by more than one sign which cannot be mistaken, is founded upon the present state of society in Europe; that thus, if it be impossible that the new philosophy should not engender a new philosophy conformable to itself, neither is it possible that the new state of society should not engender the new philosophy which I have designated to you.

After the great political and religious movement which in Europe occupied the sixteenth and seven-



teenth centuries, a new and still more important movement became necessary; civilization was called to a new and an incomparably more decisive progress. Thence, gentlemen, the eighteenth century. What was the general character of the eighteenth century? It was the conflict of the old with the new state of society; the very idea of the eighteenth century is the necessity of a crisis.

The French monarchy, after having marched from conquest to conquest to its natural frontiers, and demolished successively all the powers that had attempted to oppose its progress, had finally arrived by the genius of Richelieu and of Louis the Fourteenth, almost to the last boundaries of its territory and centralization. Nothing was wanting to France, thus situated as to externals, but a better internal organization. But this new internal organization could not take place without overthrowing that which already existed; and to overthrow it was very easy, for the society organized of old had already fallen into ruins. In fact, what had become of the monarchy in the eighteenth century? The monarchs themselves were a mere tradition of splendor and magnificence without real or apparent virtue. The monarchy which had been the providence of France, which had created it, had raised it and rendered it illustrious, was no longer sensibly perceptible to her. What did it do for the country abroad? What useful-war, what

glorious combats has it to show? The seven years war and the battle of Rosbach. What did it do at home? What was the life of royalty? It was the life of Versailles. The French noblesse, who formerly had served their country so well, and had mingled their history with that of all the glorious feats of arms of France, had lost the manly habits of their ancestors, and like royalty they slumbered amidst their pleasures. The French clergy, which had in the seventeenth century produced the Church of France, had degenerated into a worldly clergy, among which impiety was almost held in honor, and which has produced the most envenomed adversaries of Christianity. Finally the French people itself, wearied with a royalty that no longer employed them, with a nobility that was no longer an example to them, with a clergy that faintly taught them articles of faith which they no longer sustained by the authority of their morals; the French people had sunk into a state of deplorable corruption, sufficiently betrayed by the success of the works that then circulated among all classes, and carried into all the poison of systematic immorality. In such a state of things, a revolution was necessary for a thousand reasons; it took place, I come neither to defend nor to attack it; I explain it. It took place, and the throne, the noblesse, the clergy, the whole ancient order fell to the ground. The ancient order was

the exclusive dominion of the monarchical principle, of the noblesse and of a religion of the state. In forsaking one exclusive system we are led into another exclusive system of an opposite nature. Hence the exclusive dominion of the monarchical principle, of a religion of the state, and of a privileged noblesse, was succeeded by the abolition of all public worship, by the sovereignty of the people, and an absolute democracy. But this democracy, spreading terror around it, had soon to sustain formidable conflicts with the rest of Europe. Thence the necessity of a government purely revolutionary, that is, of a council of war instead of a government. But after the sovereignty of the people, that it might defend itself the better, had resolved itself into a great council of war, it was necessary, in order to defend itself still more effectually, and to be able to act with greater energy, that it should resolve itself again into a great individual who charged himself with representing it: as has been said, the revolution became a man; the sovereignty passed from the council of war to the dictatorship, to a military dictatorship; thence our wars, our conquests, our victories, and our disasters.

These revolutions were necessary, and they were beneficial to humanity; they have at least shaken if they have not reanimated the south of Europe; they have visited the benumbed and languid inhab-

itants of the two peninsulas, and apprized them that the hour of awakening was come. On the other hand we have not appeared in vain upon the fields of battle in Germany; there also we have given the first impulse to a movement which has been useful and which endures. In the mean time the revolutionary system substituted in France for the ancient regime, exclusive as that which it had overturned, and more ardent and violent, was commissioned only to destroy what it has destroyed without being itself established. It was only to appear, to do its work, and to disappear. It appeared for a moment with the convention; it has disappeared forever with the empire.

Now let us cast our eyes towards the north, which is always in face of France; for France draws the south along with her without accounting to it for her actions; but she has always been compelled to reckon with the north, which possesses a genius and a destiny of its own. What had been passing in the north? What was the state of society in the north? In a few words, gentlemen, you know that beyond the Rhine were thrones, absolute but paternal; a warlike noblesse that had covered itself with glory in the seven years war; a clergy reformed once for all, perfectly identified with the masses of population by their doctrines and morals, and in the enjoyment of boundless authority and veneration; and nations,

honest, sufficiently industrious, warlike, and moved to obedience by the spontaneous impulse of sympathy and love. By the side of the ancient Austria two new empires had arisen at the voice of genius, young and consequently full of futurity; deeply imbued with the new spirit, and at the same time absolute in their form and military in their manners. Here you see the fair side of the north. But we must not forget that the nations there were entirely in the power of their chiefs; that these chiefs disposed of them at will, and sometimes disposed of them badly. The people intervened not at all in their own affairs; no national representation, no free emission of thought, unless by way of privilege and subject to the good pleasure of governments. Such an order of things was surely not produced by the last effort of German civilization, and consequently it was necessary that this order of things should come to its end. The formidable conflict of the north and south of Europe in the long war between France and Germany is nothing but the conflict of absolute monarchies with democracy. The result has been the downfall of democracy in France, and a considerable loss of absolute power to the monarchical governments of Germany. You know that it is not the masses of population which appear upon fields of battle, but the ideas, the causes for which they combat. Thus at Leipsig and Waterloo the causes which

encountered each other were those of paternal monarchy and military democracy. Which prevailed, gentlemen? Neither the one nor the other. Which was the conqueror? Which was vanquished at Waterloo? Gentlemen, none was vanquished. No, I protest that none was vanquished; the only conquerors were European civilization and the charte. Yes, gentlemen, it was the charte, the voluntary present of Louis the Eighteenth, the charte maintained by Charles the Tenth, the charte called to rule over France, and destined to subdue, I say not its enemies, for it has none, it has none any more, but all who retarded French civilization; it is the charte which has gone forth brilliantly from the sanguinary conflict of the two systems which now have equally served their time, namely, absolute monarchy and the extravagances of democracy. The fact, that from one end of Europe to the other the charte draws upon itself the eyes of all, causes every heart to beat, and rallies around it the wishes and the hopes of all, is the most convincing proof that it is the true result of all the troubles and the wars that filled the conclusion of the last century and the commencement of the nineteenth. Imitations of it, which were unfortunate, and which I am far from approving, manifest sufficiently the deep sympathy of the south of Europe with the glorious results of the long labors of our nation. But also

beyond the Rhine our ancient adversaries have hastened to claim the work of the new monarchy. In fact, gentlemen, all the banks of the Rhine are ruled according to excellent though imperfect imitations of our fine constitution. Bavaria, Wirtemberg, and Baden, have now representative governments; and preparatory experiments of inferior degrees of representative governments in the provincial districts, are already extending their circle in the north and reach even to the Baltic. Surely, since 1815, European civilization has by no means receded; on the contrary it has been in all parts extended and developed; and I repeat it, this charte, which went forth from the disasters of Waterloo, now covers the greater and the better part of Europe, and it is expected and invoked by the rest. Now, if it is an incontestable fact that the future prospects of Europe depend upon it, and if this is still more evidently the case in regard to France, let us rapidly examine what is the nature of the charte that is called to such destinies.

It appears, at first sight, as if the charte had sanctioned the social order anterior to the eighteenth century, and which the eighteenth century has overturned. In fact, I there behold a king, a powerful monarchy, and a throne efficient and respected; I behold a chamber of peers invested with privileges and surrounded with universal veneration; I behold an established religion which,

taking our children in the cradle, teaches each of them, at an early hour, his duties, his destiny, and the end of this life. And here we behold an element which does not proceed from the French revolution. It is nevertheless there, gentlemen, and it is necessary that it should be there; it is necessary that it should from day to day be more firmly established, and win back forever both its respect and power; but is this the only element in the charte? No, gentlemen. By the side of the throne and the chamber of peers I also behold a chamber of deputies nominated directly by the people, and taking a part in the making of all the laws, that warrant and authorize all particular measures; so that nothing can be done in the last village of France in which the chamber of deputies does not concur. Here is a new element. I perceive some image of it to have formerly existed in certain assemblies and certain judicial bodies; but it was more apparent than real; I find it in reality only in the wishes of the eighteenth century, and in the irregular attempts of the French revolution to establish it. We have then on the one hand an element of the old government, and on the other an element of the revolutionary democracy. Upon what terms do these elements subsist in the charte? In fact, gentlemen, they are there, and their union is so intimate that the most skilful civilian would be much embarrassed theoretically to define and



to mark the limits of the particular agency of each of these two branches of the sovereign power ; and in this respect there exists a certain obscurity which has precisely the effect of binding these two elements more strongly together. In fact, our glorious constitution is no mathematical fiction of the equilibrium of legislative and executive power, nor is it any of those vain and empty abstractions which should be left to the infancy of representative government ; our constitution is the real union of the king and people, seeking jointly the best manner of governing and of serving their common country. This is not all ; in the charte I find, notwithstanding the existence of the chamber of peers, that all Frenchmen have access to all offices ; so that even a common soldier, as the author of the charte said himself, carries his baton of a marshal of France in his cartridge box ; the lowest Frenchman may in every career ascend to the foot of the throne. Notwithstanding the existence of an established religion, I behold in characters equally manifest the liberty of every form of worship, and the liberty of the press ; so that none may be destitute of religious instruction, while at the same time the freedom of worship permits every one to seek it in the different communions of the same Church ; and that finally, thanks to the liberty of the press, no truth being suppressed, every man may in sincerity determine

his own thoughts in favor of those opinions which seem to him the most true. Thus I behold in the charte all contrarieties ; and this circumstance is what some men deplore. There are some who admire nothing in it but its democratical part, and would use that as the means of rendering all other parts powerless ; there are others who sigh over the introduction of democratical elements, and who turn unceasingly the monarchical parts of the constitution against the democratical elements which serve as their safeguard. On both sides equal error, equal prepossession in favor of the past, and equal ignorance of the present time. On both sides, gentlemen, there are men whose age is exceedingly respectable, and who, belonging some to the seventeenth, and some to the eighteenth century, and not being the sons of the present epoch, are perfectly excusable in not comprehending the nineteenth century and its mission. But, thank God, every thing promises that the irresistible march of time will by degrees unite the minds and hearts of all in the intelligence and in the love of this constitution, which contains at once the throne and the country, monarchy and democracy, order and liberty, aristocracy and equality, all the elements of history, of thought, and of things.

The consequence of all this, gentlemen, is that if the constitution and the laws of France contain all opposite elements blended into that harmony

which is the very spirit of this constitution and of these laws, the spirit of this constitution is, pardon the expression, a true eclecticism. This spirit in developing itself applies to all things. It is already reflected in our literature, which itself contains two elements that may and that ought to go together, classic legitimacy and romantic innovation. Without pursuing these applications, I ask, if all around us is mixed, complex, and mingled, is it possible that philosophy should be exempt from the influence of the general spirit; I ask whether philosophy can avoid being eclectic when all that is around it is so; and whether consequently the philosophical reformation which I undertook in 1816, in spite of every obstacle does not necessarily proceed from the general movement of society throughout Europe and particularly in France? Eclecticism is so strenuously assaulted by the adherents of both the former philosophical systems of past times, which are still the subject of debate among us, precisely because it inspires a presentiment, and is a forerunner of futurity. Eclecticism stands in the order of philosophy in the place of moderation; and moderation, which can do nothing in the days of crisis, becomes afterwards necessary. Eclecticism is necessarily the philosophy of the present century. This is my inmost conviction. It is not of yesterday, gentlemen; but I know that our communications are not made in a single day;

I know that I am now speaking in 1828, and not in 1850.

The lectures which I have had the honor of delivering to you, during the last quarter, contain a general introduction to my ulterior instruction. The subject of this instruction is to be the history of philosophy. Now that our theoretical as well as our historical principles are well determined and fixed, we shall be able to guide ourselves easily throughout the immense career which is before us; we shall be able, at will, to stop now at one epoch, and now at another; to transfer ourselves first to the heights of the Himalaya and of Thibet, or to descend to the shores of Greece, or to immerse ourselves in the middle ages and in scholastics; or to follow the fruitful traces of modern philosophy and of Des Cartes, in England, or in France, or in Germany. Thus, to whatever epoch of the history of philosophy the next year may lead us, we shall know perfectly where we are, whither we wish to go, and whence we depart. Such was the end of this instruction. Separated from this auditory during eight years, it was my wish to establish first my point of departure and my definite end, so that the young men of France who formerly had some confidence in me, might, at the present day, know, on all points and in all things, him who, after a long exile, now returns to devote the rest of his life to their service. Yes, gentlemen, he who now

addresses you in this place wishes you fully to understand that he belongs to no party and to no coterie; in politics he belongs only to his country; in philosophy he belongs to no system in particular, but to all; and, to use the expression, to the common spirit which governs all, and which is completely developed only by the very conflict in which all incomplete, exclusive, and hostile principles are engaged. He acknowledges that he is satisfied with his century, with his country, and with the present order of things. He strongly desires the continuance of constitutional order in all its parts, such as they are; without retrenchment, without reserve, and without after-thought. Here the throne, and the institutions of public liberty; there Christianity, and the sacred rights of examination. On the last point I have already made a profession of my faith, and I repeat it willingly. I believe that in Christianity all truths are contained; but these eternal truths may and ought to be approached, disengaged, and illustrated by philosophy. Truth has but one foundation; but truth assumes two forms, namely, mystery and scientific exposition; I revere the one, I am the organ and the interpreter of the other.

You ought now to know me well. I am still the same who, twelve years ago, at this chair, then surrounded by very few, first faltered the name of eclecticism; it is this system of which the timid

developement filled the whole first part of my career; it is this system which you will recognise in every page of the account that, in 1826, I rendered to my fellow citizens and to my friends, of my first efforts, and, as it were, my philosophical apprenticeship; it is the same system which, extended and enlarged, will preside over the whole of my ulterior instruction. What in 1815 I wished to establish, I at this day wish to establish still; it is eclecticism in consciousness, in all the parts of philosophy, in speculation and in history, in the general history of humanity, and in the history of philosophy which is its crown; such was formerly, and such is at this day my aim: such is the banner to which I shall always faithfully adhere.

I am unwilling to leave this auditory without offering you my most sincere thanks for the patient attention which, throughout the whole of the quarter, you have been pleased to bestow upon the exposition of the general views which will govern my instruction. Next year I shall endeavor to establish them more firmly by applying them; and I shall be happy to find again among you, gentlemen, the same zeal for philosophy, the same indulgence for the professor.



## NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR.\*

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### A. Page 166.

*And this is the sacred origin of prophecies, of pontificates.*

The knowledge of the existence of spontaneous reason, thus introduced, and made visible to the eye of the understanding, by the author's reasoning, seems to be the commencement of a new epoch in modern philosophy. But modern philosophy, as the author frequently observes, is in its infancy. It is of immense importance, that mankind should know that spontaneous reason is indeed inspiration; a fact, if I mistake not, already stated by Reid, and referred to in the motto of his essays, from the book of Job. "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty, giveth them understanding." But what Reid had proved to be conformable to common sense, Cousin has now demonstrated; that is, he has made it visible to the eye of the understanding, in reflecting upon the data of consciousness. The reader will not omit to remark the specific difference between, and the generic identity of spontaneous and reflective reason. By means of spontaneous reason man is endowed with faith and common sense; by means of the same reason, when the understanding is formed, and man is able to reflect upon and to examine truth with all the freedom of conscious volition, he is endowed with intelligence. Thus, at first he learns to know what is true, he then learns to distinguish truth from fallacy, and thus to perceive what is true and what is not true; finally, he learns to perceive the different relations

\* N. B. These notes were written by the translator, after the first five lectures had been printed, accordingly as they suggested themselves to his mind; and without any pretensions to a regular plan of elucidating the work.



according to which truths are arranged, so as to constitute different parts of one system of truth; and thus his understanding is enabled to see truths. For the understanding performs, in regard to truths, precisely the same office that the eye performs, in respect to the rays of light radiating from every visible object; it brings them first to an intellectual focus, to which Kant first gave the name of unity of apperception. And it is in consequence of this operation, that they form distinct images on the retina of intellectual perception. The acts of the understanding, in producing those objects of perception which are given by means of things existing in time and space, have been profoundly analyzed by Kant; so that reflective reason is much better known to modern philosophy than spontaneous reason. Yet both are as yet very little known. Of objects of perception which do not exist in time and space, nothing has as yet been made clearly visible to human understanding, by reflective reason; and it is therefore highly important that there should also exist a critique of spontaneous reason, which cannot be given within the narrow limits of a note. Suffice it to say that although spontaneous reason is doubtless the effect of inspiration, yet all inspiration is not spontaneous reason, and much less is it revelation.

#### B. Page 169.

*And as we ourselves furnish the form of our consciousness, Kant has, in his vocabulary, affixed to the categories the predicate of subjective, and called them subjective laws, that is to say laws of personal individuality.*

I understand Kant thus; two factors are required to constitute real objective knowledge, namely, thought and observation. The percipient subject is the understanding of a human individual. But the understanding of an individual can recognise nothing as an object of its own thought, unless it be influenced by reason to arrange its various perceptions, in accordance with those universal laws of reason, which constitute the transcendental unity of apperception. The universal modes of thought, thus arranged in the understanding by the influence of reason, are what Kant calls the categories of pure understanding; and unless the understandings of all men act according to these modes of thought, which reason prescribes to the understanding of all, no human being can recognise any object of perception as a distinct and determinate object of his thought. Now because reason is one, and prescribes the same

laws to the understandings of all men ; therefore, as every man may become acquainted with the subjective laws of thought by his own experience, he may judge concerning all that must be given by the purely subjective form of the understanding, in the thought of all other men. That is, he may judge whether a given idea can possibly be conceived by human understanding, as an object of its thought, or not ; and thereby, he may determine *à priori*, that is, without consulting any experience derived from any thing beyond the sphere of his own individual understanding, whether a given idea can possibly be conceived by human understanding or not. But if the conception of a given idea be thus ascertained to be possible ; it does not therefore follow, that there exists any real thing which represents it, independently of individual imagination. This question can be decided only by experience. Therefore, objective reality cannot be ascertained by reasoning *à priori* alone, but requires to be confirmed by experience. Such was Kant's doctrine ; and I think it true. Whenever his followers have contrived to slip the curb-rein of his critique, on pretences that have encouraged them to make assertions *à priori* respecting, not the form, but the matter of knowledges, without the aid of experience, they have generally experienced the mortification of being led into absurdities, which experience has afterwards contradicted. It is strange that M. Cousin should have been so far misled by Kant's commentators or followers, as to suppose that Kant himself ever maintained, that our knowledge of the existence of external things was less certain than our knowledge of our own existence. On the contrary, this Cartesian fallacy has been completely refuted by Kant ; who has formally demonstrated the following proposition : "the sole, but empirically determinate, consciousness of my own existence, proves the existence of objects in space besides myself." See *Critik der reinen Vernunft*, page 200, sixth edition, Leipzig, 1818.

#### C. Page 170.

*The problem, upon the solution of which this great man suffered shipwreck, modern philosophy still finds before it. I have myself, on a former occasion, given a solution of it, which time has not shaken. This solution is founded upon the distinction between spontaneous and reflective reason.*

Of this solution the translator is unable to judge, as he has not seen it. But if God be considered as the original fountain

of life, and all beings as recipients of life from him ; then original reason would be that thought, which entirely corresponds to the original ends of divine love and wisdom ; and derivative reason would consist of those ideas, which are so modified as to correspond to the affections of some finite individual thinking being, or, of some class of such beings, whose common ideas correspond to the affections of their common thought. Now in reflection, every man recognises his own thoughts ; namely, those ideas which correspond to the affections of his individual love ; and he distinguishes them from ideas which he perceives to be given to him, in common with all other inhabitants of this world, by means of things existing in time and space which represent them ; and by means of such things, we are also able to produce impressions upon the senses of others, which enable, and indeed compel the affections of their individual life to produce those particular ideas in their minds, which we desire to communicate to them. If there ever existed a man in this world, whose personal identity consisted in the love of regarding as the ends of his life, no other ends than such as were the very ends of divine love and wisdom itself ; then, all the ideas, thoughts and acts of that man, which were the immediate effects of his personal individuality, were in fact the ideas, thoughts and acts of original reason in all its purity. And if that man gradually put away from his external apparent individuality, all affections of our common nature, which he, in the same manner as we do, perceived as his own, (although he never gave way to, or acted according to the tendencies of any affections, which were not those of divine love and wisdom itself,) then, after having thus removed, by the energies of his own will, all affections of our common nature which were not exclusively the affections of divine love and wisdom, so that these alone constituted his personal identity, — that man may, with propriety, be said to have been God himself in a human form. But although God could assume a human form, yet no man can assume the form of God ; and therefore, it is impossible that the mind of any finite human individual should ever spontaneously produce thought entirely corresponding to the affections of divine love and wisdom. Yet in proportion as every man, (by preferring duty to inclination, or the will of his Father in heaven to his own will,) removes those affections from his mind which are at variance with the affections of divine love and wisdom, the affections of his life will be ruled more and

more by divine love and wisdom ; and the ideas produced in his mind in correspondence with affections thus ruled, will approximate more and more to absolute truth. But no ideas produced by spontaneous reason in the mind of any finite human individual, will ever be perfectly adequate to ideas corresponding to the original ends of that love and wisdom which in their unity constitutes the personality of God. Nothing that is an object of perception to any finite being, can therefore be absolutely true, and eternally immutable. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

#### D. Page 173.

*And natural Atheism has no existence.*

The radical errors of modern philosophy are all occasioned by the ignorance which as yet so generally prevails, respecting the influence of individual volition, upon our perceptions of truth and falsehood. It is evident, that God has three ends in view in respect to every man. First, to enable every man to receive a life from him which he shall perceive as his own individual property, and act from it in perfect freedom ; secondly, to give one general principle of life to all men in common ; and, thirdly, to unite the life of every individual with the life of the race, and vice versa, in such reciprocal relations, that they may coexist with each other, in that perfect harmony which is perceived by all as happiness. But this last purpose cannot be effected unless every individual learn to limit the dictates of his own arbitrary will, by submission to those laws of divine wisdom by which the harmonious coexistence of all is determined. Atheism does not originate in any mistake of the understanding, but in the perversity of the will. Atheism is a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies. No man is an Atheist, who loves his neighbor as himself. Atheism originates in exclusive selfishness, in self-worship and the love of dominion. Therefore, the acknowledgement of his own existence, is no proof that a man is not an Atheist ; any more than the assertion of a thief, that stolen goods are his own, is any proof that he is not a thief. Every man who asserts that human beings are, of right, selfish, and that neighborly love has no real existence, and who really believes that this is true, and also acts according to this belief, is an Atheist. For God is love ; and if we deny the existence of love, (of the love of others, for selfishness is the very oppo-

site of love,) we deny the existence of God, and we are Atheists. But all Atheism is practical, and Atheism purely theoretical has no real existence.

#### E. Page 175.

*Nothing then remains, than to conclude that the striking differences every where visible in the human race, arise from reflection.*

I believe that the possibility of error was originally caused by the necessity of separating, in reflection, the ideas and thoughts corresponding to the affections of that individuality which man perceives as properly his own, from the ideas and thoughts corresponding to those affections which are formed in him by acting in conformity with the dictates of divine love and wisdom, is evident. I suppose this also to be symbolically represented, by the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in Genesis; where the tree of life represents the perception of truth corresponding to the affections of divine love and wisdom; and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the perceptions of imaginary truth, proceeding from the arbitrary individuality of man, when he ascribes life to himself and not to God; and, therefore, wishes to determine what shall be true or false, according to the decrees of his own good pleasure.

#### F. Page 189.

*Man changes much, but he changes not fundamentally; man is given; his nature, his intelligence, and his physical constitution, with its necessary bounds are given. The developement of his intelligence is not infinite, it is finite; it is measurable by the nature and the reach of that intelligence itself.*

It is no easy matter to understand what M. Cousin precisely means in this place. From many other passages in this work, we have every reason to infer, that he considers man, as a recipient of life from God; and humanity, as destined to manifest the infinite perfections of the divine essence. If so, the developement of human intelligence must necessarily be infinite. For its only terminus, would in that case be divine intelligence; towards which human intelligence may approximate to eternity, without ever being able to reach any measure of intelligence, that can be compared to that which is divine. Schelling says, and I think he says truly, that finite existence can represent the manifestation of the infinite, only in an infinite series.

## G. Page 224.

*This necessity is the unanswerable demonstration of the intervention of providence, in human affairs, and of the moral government of the world.*

It is evident, that unless the laws of nature were fixed and determinate, it would be impossible for the human mind to learn, by experience, to foresee the existence of natural phenomena, and for man, in any wise to influence the existence of natural things by his volition.

But the power which man exercises over natural things, is the only means by which that freedom and rationality, which constitute his moral nature are developed. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that the determinate properties, and the apparent necessity of the laws of nature, are expressly ordained by divine providence, for the purpose of enabling man to think and act with freedom and rationality, and thus to become a recipient of that love and wisdom from God, wherein humanity essentially consists.

## H. Page 283.

*Gentlemen, the government of this world is perfectly just ; prosperity and misfortune are distributed as they ought to be ; prosperity is awarded only to virtue ; misfortune is inflicted only upon vice.*

There is scarcely any subject, which is so generally misunderstood as the true nature of justice. Most men have scarcely any other idea of justice, than that of an impartial distribution of rewards and punishments, according to some particular law. But the true idea of justice, is not necessarily connected with any idea of rewards or punishments whatsoever ; for these exist only, where there exists an inclination to violate, or not to fulfil the laws of justice. The true idea of justice is founded first, on the idea of God, as the Lord and giver of life to all men in common, and to every man in particular ; secondly, on the idea of the coexistence of human beings, who all receive life from God, in reciprocal relations to each other, so that the enjoyment of life by each is in some measure dependent on all ; and, thirdly, on the acknowledgement of all, that the life given to each, and perceived and acted from by each as if it were his own, is nevertheless given to him by God, on the express condition, that he shall use it so, that the enjoyment of his life shall be consistent with the enjoyment of life by all beings with whom he coexists.

Hence, when justice is predicated of God, nothing else can

be meant by it, than that God, being essential love to all mankind, and desiring to give to all men the fullest measure of life which they can receive from him so as to perceive and to enjoy it as their own, has by his infinite wisdom devised, and constantly maintains, certain laws of order, by which the reciprocal relations between one man and all men, are so determined, that all, and each in particular, may receive the fullest measure possible of life,—and consequently of delight and happiness from him. Justice on the part of man consists, first, in the acknowledgement that this is the case ; and, secondly, in the desire to know what these laws of divine order are, that he may make them the rule of his conduct. When the desire of man to know the laws of divine justice, that he may fulfil them, proceeds from the conviction, that doing so is the only means by which he can really and truly promote his own happiness, his justice is founded in intelligence ; but when it proceeds from the still greater delight which he experiences in promoting the happiness of those with whom, by his coexistence with them, he is associated, his justice is founded in love ; yet in both instances, justice is founded in the practical acknowledgement, that the life of man is not originally his own, but is given to him by God, and subject to the government of his divine wisdom which proceeds from his love to all mankind ; and this acknowledgement is religion. When a man does not desire to know what are the laws of divine justice, in order to conform to them ; but rather in order to use them as the means of exercising unlawful and arbitrary dominion over others, by fraud or violence ; he virtually and practically denies the existence of God, and renounces all religion. And hence it becomes necessary that coercion should be used against him ; this, therefore, is permitted, and divine providence provides, also by such means, for the protection of those who submit to the dictates of justice, and who delight in it. But in this world, it is evident, that man is as yet, as it were, in a nascent state ; that the affections of his will have not yet assumed a fully determinate character ; and that men are therefore not yet associated together according to the agreement or disagreement of such affections of their love as are fully formed, but according to an order of existence best adapted to the formation of such affections as shall make them most fully recipient of divine love and wisdom, when their education and ultimate formation shall be completed. Hence, it follows necessarily, that after this life, all men will be associated with each other, according to the affections of justice, which

in this life have been formed in them ; because, these affections of justice are the only conditions upon which, and the only means by which, men can be so associated with each other as, in the reciprocal relations of their coexistence, to become recipients of life, and thereby of love and wisdom, and consequently of happiness from God. Therefore, all men will doubtless receive that plus or minus of happiness hereafter, for which they have been prepared—by “their deeds done in the body.” And this is the only possible idea of eternal rewards and punishments, of which human understanding can form any intelligible idea. It is therefore doubtless true, as M. Cousin says, that “the government of this world is perfectly just ;” and that “prosperity and misfortune are distributed as they ought to be,” even in this world ; because divine providence, or divine love and wisdom, doubtless ordains every thing in this world, so as to enable men to become as just as possible, and to prevent them, as far as possible, from becoming as unjust as they are disposed to become. But if M. Cousin means to say, that even in this world, “prosperity is awarded only to virtue,” and that “misfortune is inflicted only on vice,” he is mistaken ; and he states a manifest fallacy, which is directly in contradiction with all sound ideas of divine justice. For divine justice evidently consists in doing all that can be done to make men just ; that is, to make them learn to love justice. Therefore, when misfortunes have a greater tendency than prosperity, to make men, comparatively virtuous, learn to love justice still more than they do ; then misfortunes are inflicted upon the virtuous. And when prosperity has a greater tendency than misfortunes, to make vicious men less unjust than they are, then prosperity is awarded to the vicious. The love and wisdom of God, which operates in making men collectively more just than they otherwise would be, is properly called divine justice ; and the love and wisdom of God, which operates in making men singly more just than they otherwise would be, is called divine mercy. The highest benefit that God can possibly confer on man is to make him just ; and the word to justify, ought never to be predicated of God, in any other sense.

#### I. Page 381.

*England, gentlemen, is a very considerable island ; in England every thing is insular, every thing stops at certain limits, nothing is there developed on a great scale. England is not destitute of invention ; but history declares that she does not possess that power of generalization and deduc-*



*tion which alone is able to push an idea or a principle to its entire development, and to draw from it all the consequences which it encloses. Compare the political revolution of England with ours, and you must perceive the profound difference of their respective characters; on the one hand every thing is local and proceeds from secondary principles; on the other, every thing is general and ideal.*

It is rather amusing to observe such little traits of national vanity, peeping forth from among the many excellent and dignified qualities that distinguish M. Cousin's philosophical character. Surely an insular situation does not countenance any presumption that "every thing stops at certain limits," and that "nothing is developed on a grand scale" in the spirit of a nation, that sways the trident of the ocean and that has established a civilization which doubtless will for ages retain much of the spirit in which it originated, and which probably will extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific in breadth, as it now extends from New Brunswick to the Gulph of Mexico in length; to say nothing of India and New South Wales. The characteristic mark of the spirit of the English nation is practical wisdom; deliberation concerning what is possible, and inflexible perseverance, as well as great power, in accomplishing all that can be done. It is quite as probable that it was the same good sense which occasioned "the honorable protestation against the last extravagances of sensualism" made by the Scotch philosophers, and which prevented Locke from falling into those extravagances, as that this omission was occasioned by his not possessing "that power of generalization and deduction which alone is able to push an idea or a principle to its ultimate development." What the spirit of Great Britain may want of that ardor and impetuosity which so often leads to rashness, is surely amply supplied by the spirit of Ireland; and Berkely's idealism is quite as bold and thorough-going as Condillac's sensualism. And when the British revolution is compared to the French, it must not be forgotten that it took place more than a century before it; and that the American revolution and the constitution of the United States were the effects of British spirit as well as of British wisdom.

#### J. Page 398.

*Fichte distinguishes between a twofold I, the one phenomenal, namely, the I which each of us represents; the other is itself the substance of the I, namely, God himself.*

Fichte has, in arriving at this point, indeed reached the very

summit of the pyramid of human science ; and if the man lives or has lived who has as yet discovered a flaw in the chain of reasoning that leads to this point, I am ignorant of the fact ; nor have I ever heard that any author has even pretended to refute the reasoning of Fichte which leads to this result ; although many have been very angry with him for it, and some have, on this account, even denounced his philosophical doctrines as atheistical. Yet the very fact which he has scientifically demonstrated, is precisely that which, I think, renders the truth of Christianity, conceivable to human understanding. For if God is really present in the centre of every human soul, and if that life which we perceive as our own is indeed his life, and given to us to be perceived as ours, on certain conditions, which are determined according to those laws of divine order, which regulate, and which constitute the substantiality of all existence ; it follows, that the difference between a man in whom God's own proper life was manifested, and another man in whom the life of a finite individual, who is not God, is manifested, would be rendered perceptible, by the difference between the ends of divine love and wisdom, and those of a finite individual. And, in order to decide whether a man who asserted that he was the Son of God, that is, the only possible manifestation of love and wisdom really divine, in the affections, thoughts and acts of a human being, spoke the truth or was an impostor ; it would be necessary to consider whether the ends of the life, manifested in all his words and actions, were those of the common father of mankind, or whether they were the ends of a finite, exclusive and arbitrary individual. " If I do not the works of my father believe me not." See on this subject, Fichte's *Anweisung zu einem seligen Leben*. Fichte however leaves us at the summit of the pyramid. He shows us that God is the source of all truly intellectual perception ; but not being able to show how God can also be perceived to be the source of all real sensible perception, he denies the truth of all objects of that perception. Kant on the contrary, although he never attempted to account for the existence of sensible perception, admits it to be true. But objects which are given by sensible perception he calls phenomena ; and objects which are given by perception purely intellectual, he calls noumena. Indeed, the very end and aim of Kant's philosophy, is to account for all that we can account for, upon real and substantial grounds ; and yet rather to acknowledge the boundaries of our real knowledge, than to deceive ourselves and others by appearing to extend them by merely

hypothetical assertions, or by excusing ourselves for not accounting for our actual perceptions, by hypothetical denials of their possibility. This ought certainly to be made the inviolable rule of all philosophy pretending to the rank of real science.

K. Page 428.

*Thus, to judge from symptoms by no means equivocal, futurity seems in Europe to appertain to a philosophical system very different from either of the two exclusive philosophies whose conflict filled the eighteenth century.*

The eighteenth century has stored up, for the use of the nineteenth, a great abundance of scientific truths which may be depended upon ; and it has also destroyed and proved the fallacy of innumerable hypothetical assertions and denials, which in former times obscured the horizon of science, and led philosophical speculation almost inevitably astray. All facts that science now acknowledges as such, whether they regard objects of intellectual perception or of sensible perception, whether they be noumena or phenomena, are now known and acknowledged to be precisely what they are, namely, objects of perception, either to human understanding alone, or to human understanding aided by sensation. This variety of knowledge constitutes the element of the finite, or the materials of which the philosophical science of the nineteenth century is to be constructed. But modern philosophy has also arrived so far, as now to be able to recognise, in God, life itself, or the one absolute cause of all life and of all existence thence derived. The idea of the infinite and of the finite thus being given, nothing now remains to be sought for, but the relations which unite both, and give to both an interpretation, intelligible to human understanding. But the relation of effects to their cause are intelligible only when the cause is perceived to be a living cause ; and when the effects which it produces are regarded as the ends of the will of an intelligent and rational being. All enlightened nations have, under some form or other, acknowledged the personality of God ; and they have also acknowledged that both nature and man were created by the power of his conscious volition. Yet men have in all ages formed erroneous ideas of God, in consequence of having regarded all things that exist as the immediate, and not as the mediate effects of his volition. Modern civilization was produced by the Christian religion ; but the Christian religion found a civilization antecedent to it, which had been produced by various forms of paganism. The essence

of Christianity consists in respecting the freedom of man, and in leading men to intelligence, to voluntary obedience, and thence to holiness of life and communion with God, by their own free will and consent. Hence it was impossible that Christianity should destroy all the existing forms of paganism, and particularly those that constituted civil government, at once. Nor could Christianity refuse to acknowledge all preexisting governments, and the basis of their civil institutions, as the effects of divine providence. For all kinds of religion, and all governments, and consequently also all pagan religions and arbitrary governments, are maintained in existence by the providence of God, while men are incapable of being ruled in any other manner. It was indeed necessary that pagan worship should immediately be supplanted by Christian worship; and therefore it was necessary that the religious institutions of paganism should be overthrown. For if this had not been the case, our pagan ancestors could never have been instructed in Christianity; and they, consequently, could never, in any moderate degree, have been imbued with that love of justice, and that spirit of universal benevolence, which can only be acquired gradually, by obedience to the precepts of the gospel. But it was necessary that all governments, instituted under the influence of paganism, should retain their force and power until humanity should, by the influence of the gospel, have been led to a state of moral and intellectual developement, in which men would be able to perceive the true principles of legitimate government and of true religion. Yet although God permits the existence of imperfect institutions, whether civil or religious, and even sanctions them, so long as the state of human virtue and intelligence does not admit of any others; he also provides changes in them whensoever mankind arrive at a state in which such changes become necessary or beneficial. Until the last half of the eighteenth century mankind judged of the ends of God altogether from existing facts; and the status in quo was considered as the only basis of civil and religious rights. The great and frequent changes in the state of the world which took place in the seventeenth century, consists evidently in the overturning of this old principle. Mankind begin now very generally to perceive that although "whatever is is right," yet it is right only because men are not prepared for a better order of things. They begin to see that God can have no other end in view with humanity than to make all men, individually and collectively, more and more receptive of love and wisdom, and

thereby of true life, and eventually of happiness from him; and that the only legitimate title by which mankind can or ought to be governed now, is the perception of the necessity and of the use of government, and from such perception the love of government. The philosophy of the nineteenth century, and of all centuries that will succeed it, must therefore necessarily become a philosophy of ends and uses; and all sciences must therefore necessarily become subordinate to a science of the correspondence of all things to the ends or uses for which they exist, and which they are destined by God to subserve. But these uses must necessarily regard not only the development of all the elements of temporal humanity, but also, and chiefly, the preparation of humanity by this development for that ultimate state of love and wisdom which must be regarded as their substantial and eternal dwelling place.

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#### ERRATA.

The reader will please correct the following errors:

In page vi, preface, 12th line from top, for *presented* read *represented*.

P. 160, 9th line from bottom, for *empiristic* read *empiric*.

In several places in 12th lecture for *Cordillac* read *Condillac*.

















































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